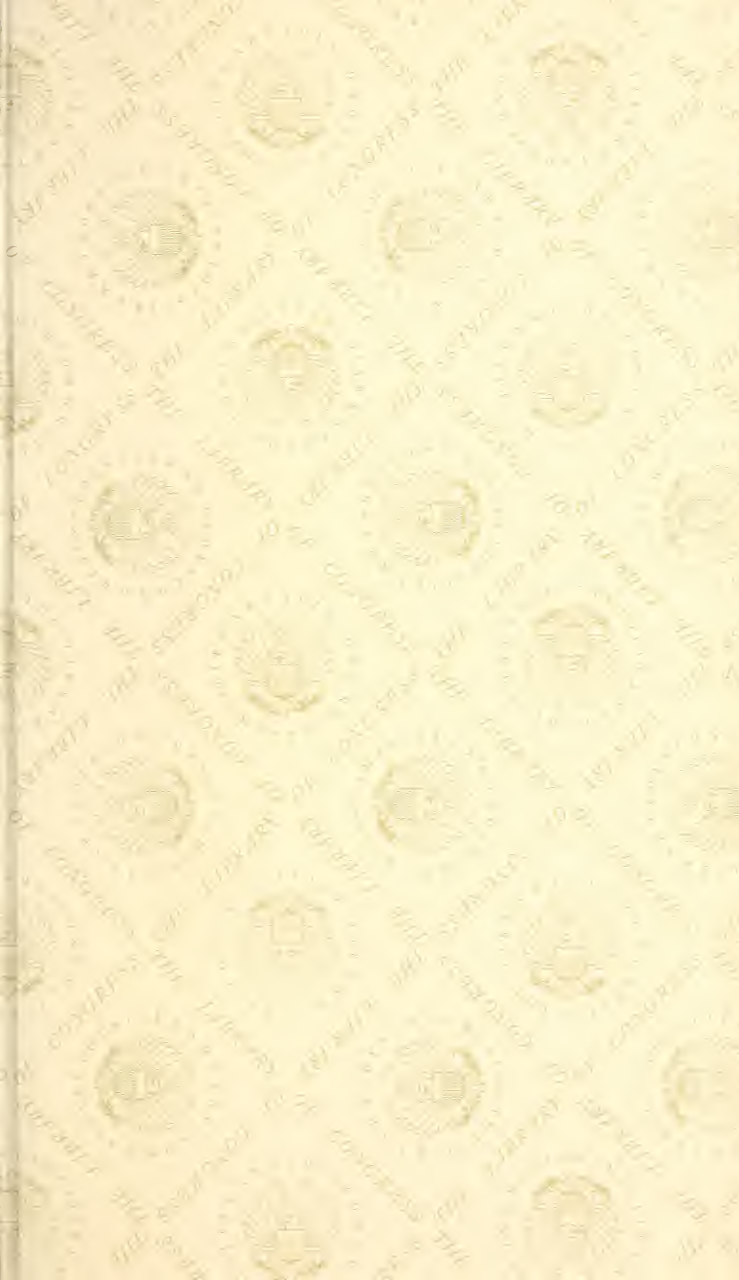


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THE  
CONFESSIONS OF ADALBERT.

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THE  
CONFESSIONS OF ADALBERT.

BY

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SUPREME CONSISTORY, &c. &c.

Translated from the German,

BY

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FROM

## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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IN the following pages, I have attempted to describe the commencement and progress of the Christian faith and life in the experience of an individual. In doing so, I have proceeded upon the conviction, that faith is not attained by the consideration of arguments for or against the Divine origin of Christianity; but that urged by an inward feeling of necessity which cannot be repulsed, and guided by a gracious Providence, we apprehend and receive that which God has revealed and appointed for the salvation of mankind; and that an insight into the nature of faith is obtained only through the possession of the latter.

Divine grace, which is the sole agent of human conversion, takes pleasure in accomplishing its object in the greatest possible variety of methods; all of which, however, agree with each other in the principal points. It has been my endeavour, in the

present work, to pourtray the guidance of an individual, in which the chief points of the guidance of others are included.

The first feelings of repentance are very rarely the most profound. There are those who truly believe, and yet have never become sufficiently acquainted with their innate depravity. The consciousness of this could indeed scarcely be borne, were it to be felt in all its dreadful extent, and did not the degree of faith, already possessed by the individual, support him under it. Some acquire this knowledge, without having fallen into gross sin, by comparing their hearts and lives with the example of Christ; others by the grief they feel at their great transgressions, and the dreadful consequences of the latter, which suddenly manifest themselves to their view. The real penitential conflict now begins, in which faith has to overcome the terrors of conscience, and in which it conquers only by the entire renunciation of its own merits. The merits of Christ can now be apprehended in reality, and the meaning of redemption understood.

He that wishes to describe the life of God in the soul, must necessarily borrow its individual features from experience. From what other source can he

become acquainted with them? Things of this nature cannot be invented. The case is different with respect to facts and individuals. Were we to borrow these from the reality, in writing a history like the present, we should deserve to be censured both in a moral and poetical point of view. I assert, that I would never have undertaken a work of this kind, or would have lost all desire to do so, had I been compelled tediously to collect the materials from real life, instead of producing them in my mind, and forming them at my pleasure. Nor do I regard it as anything very honourable to be supposed to be in possession of the ability requisite for this purpose ; for, in reality, more warmth of imagination is necessary for the composition of a single discourse, in which human life is strikingly and energetically pourtrayed, than is perhaps to be found in the whole of this book.





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LETTER I.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

14th Feb. 1826.

BEFORE you receive this letter I shall have left Switzerland, and set my foot on German ground.

I could stay no longer in my native land. The death of my parents, which dissolved the closest ties that attached me to it, put me at the same time in possession of considerable property. Until I finally resolve upon seeking some official situation, and suffer myself to be fettered by civil obligations, I do not know that I can spend my time better than in travelling; by which means I hope to gain that experience and polish, which can never be attained by remaining at home.

I had to choose between Italy, France, England, and Germany, or rather, the whole world lay before

me ; however I gave the preference to Germany. My father was born there, and had there acquired that mental culture and extensive knowledge, to which my education is so much indebted. Even as my mother, who was a native of France, taught me her language, and spoke it with me—so my father taught me German, and conversed with me in it; and as the Swiss, at least with reference to language and literature, cannot possess a character of their own, but must either assume that of the German or the French, my father endeavoured, through the whole course of my education, to give the former the preponderance in me ; and it appears to me that he succeeded in his object.

I acquired, in the most eminent institutions in Switzerland, those intellectual attainments, by which the individual is prepared for the service of the church and the state, or for the cultivation of the sciences in that country. My father thought highly of these acquirements ; and although, in his opinion, education, with reference to its extent, was superior in Germany, yet he esteemed its solidity in its narrower sphere. The deficiencies which might occur, he expected to be able to supply from that acquaintance with German literature which he early procured me. The works of those poets who were celebrated in Germany, were read both by him and myself with delight ; and even in the German prose writers, although their language

did not always seem to him to possess the perfection of French prose, he taught me to admire the depth of thought and feeling peculiar to that people. Hence the idea very naturally suggested itself to me, to devote some years to the exclusive study of German literature; and in the fulfilment of this intention, my father will certainly feel satisfied, if, where he is, sympathy with the efforts of mortals be still felt.

But what am I saying? Pardon me, my dear friend, for having endeavoured to deceive you! You must do so; for I undertook likewise to deceive my self. Away with the delusion! I must confess, that the reason which drives me from my native land, lies deeper—much deeper than I wished to make you and myself believe; but it is also, alas! something of a much less innocent nature. You, my dear friend, neither know me, nor my earlier connections; and since you have never visited my native town, that which is there related of me has never reached your ears. You perhaps too hastily bestowed your heart and your friendship upon me, after the few happy days I spent at your house. Ah, I probably do not deserve so valuable a gift! Is it because I am inwardly conscious of something that is evil, base, and vicious? By no means. From my earliest years, people thought they observed in me the rudiments of moral goodness; and I was told that I possessed a gentle, noble, and excellent disposition. This I believed, and believe it

still. But whence is it that my practice has been so much worse than my natural disposition? The very feelings, to which I thought I could give myself up without reserve, because I regarded them as the best and the noblest that I possessed, have plunged me into innumerable errors, and have been the cause of accumulating inexpressible sorrow upon others whom I love.

Do not, however, expect me to enter into the detail of these aberrations: such a confession only becomes one who has compensated for his errors by brilliant virtues. I will not make the paper blush—which is able to do so, although the contrary is asserted—still less my friend. I will only mention thus much: by a passion which I did not suppress, which I confessed, and which was unfortunately reciprocated—I destroyed the peace of an estimable family, embittered the last days of my mother, and prejudiced the minds of my fellow-townsmen against me. Being unable entirely to escape from myself and the remembrance of my errors, I am desirous of at least avoiding the place where I am incessantly reminded of the latter. I will seek that repose elsewhere, which I have trifled away in my native country; and the occupation I require shall be afforded me by those labours which have been dear to me from my youth up; and which, by means of the interest I take in them, may perhaps, for a short time, free my mind from the pain which at present corrodes it.

## LETTER II.

TELL me, my dearest friend, am I in the wrong in finding myself depicted in Lord Byron's *Childe Harold*? I presuppose the permission to compare the production of an amazing imagination, or such a characteristic individual—for the hero of the tale is no other than the poet himself—with the reality, which is always comparatively poor, or with my own poor self. Like this pilgrim, I am also about to leave my native land, in order to banish from my sight the traces of the life I there led. Like him, my intention is not so much outward enjoyment, as the escaping from myself. He has found in Greece an honourable death, in striving for that country's welfare, and rest for his spirit, which was equally tormented by its greatness and its weakness: what shall I find?—perhaps repose; but how?

Where do we discover an outlet, after having once lost ourselves in the windings of this poem, which are like the mazy walks in a labyrinth of melancholy—where every joy leads to grief, and every sorrow to still deeper woe? This spirit, which brings before



our eyes the entire glories of a world in the mourning dress of that corruption to which it is destined; this spirit—and I have never been able to read it without horror—is occasionally affected by something like a wish for annihilation :—

“Peace waits us on the shores of Acheron :  
There no forced banquet claims the sated guest,  
But silence spreads the couch of ever-welcome rest.”

Yet better feelings again burst forth in the following strophe, which I read with indescribable satisfaction, because the poet himself appears so noble and amiable in it, and also because it contains the expression of my own sentiments, inasmuch as I have never doubted, nor been able to doubt, the immortality of the soul :—

“Yet if, as holiest men have deemed, there be  
A land of souls beyond that sable shore,  
To shame the doctrine of the Sadducee  
And sophists, madly vain of dubious lore;  
How sweet it were in concert to adore,  
With those who made our mortal labours light !  
To hear each voice we feared to hear no more.”

How pleasing and friendly does the description of the place begin, where Petrarch spent his latest years ; until the bright light is suddenly turned into blackest darkness, and we are rapidly led from the enjoyments of earthly life to the brink of hell ! And is not such in reality the case ?—and can even the most cheerful

object be contemplated without trembling at the horrid forms which soon emanate from it ?

“ And the soft quiet hamlet where he dwelt,  
Is one of that complexion which seems made  
For those who their mortality have felt,  
And sought a refuge, from their hopes decay’d,  
In the deep umbrage of a green hill’s shade ;  
Which shows a distant prospect far away  
Of busy cities, now in vain display’d ;  
For they can lure no further ; and the ray  
Of a bright sun can make sufficient holiday.

Developing the mountains, leaves, and flowers,  
And shining in the brawling brook, where by  
Clear as the current glide the sauntering hours  
With a calm languor, which, though to the eye  
Idlesse it seem, hath its morality.  
If from society we learn to live,  
’Tis solitude should teach us how to die ;  
It hath no flatterers ; vanity can give  
No hollow aid ; alone, man with his God must strive.

Or it may be, with demons, who impair  
The strength of better thoughts, and seek their prey  
In melancholy bosoms, such as were  
Of moody texture from their earliest day,  
And lov’d to dwell in darkness and dismay,  
Deeming themselves predestin’d to a doom  
Which is not of the pangs that pass away :  
Making the sun like blood, the earth a tomb,  
The tomb a hell, and hell itself a murkier gloom.”

You are, perhaps, already weary of these quotations ; however, you must permit me to give you one

more. During the whole of this day's journey, I have done nothing else but read this poem ; and now, on arriving at my lodging for the night, I cannot better employ the hours, before retiring to rest, than by imparting my thoughts to you in those of the poet, since both are almost become one. He that is still able to love nature, and to find pleasure in her solitudes and repose in her wildernesses, gives us no cause for apprehension. I will not speak of myself ; although I have often sat for hours on the declivity of our mountains—above me, their snow-covered summits—before me, an abyss, and in its depths the thundering cataract ; how mournful, yet how soothing, how tranquil have I often felt in such a situation ! Have you read, in the life of Alfieri, how he swims into the sea, then places his back against a rock, turns his face towards the billows, and contemplates their motion for hours together ? Hear Lord Byron :—

“ There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,  
There is a rapture on a lonely shore,  
There is society, where none intrudes,  
By the deep sea, and music in its roar :  
I love not man the less, but nature more,  
From these our interviews, in which I steal  
From all I may be, or have been before,  
To mingle with the universe, and feel  
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.”

I wish you a better night's rest, than I can expect ; for my head is heated, and my heart is melancholy. Why have I suffered myself to be so captivated by Byron? My intention was to apply myself to German literature,

## LETTER III.

THE place from whence I at present address you, is a small town, where several eminent men reside. I visited them, and they gave me a description of the literary state of Germany; in return, I was under the necessity of drawing a similar sketch, with respect to Switzerland. I could only feel grateful for such a friendly reception, but shall probably make no use of the permission they gave me to renew my visit.

The weather, gloomy and tempestuous, as it may be expected to be at this season of the year, affords me no opportunity of making excursions into the circumjacent country, which, without possessing anything that is particularly striking, is said to be of a very friendly and pleasing character. I am not well, and on this account must keep my room. I therefore walk up and down in it, sometimes stand at the window, and cast a look down into the wet and empty streets. Just now I took up the Spanish Don Quixote, which accompanied me on my journey, and thought to amuse myself with Sancho's entertaining conversations with his master. But such an indescribable pain proceeded from the centre of my heart, that



the page of the book I was reading at that moment will certainly never fail to point itself out to me by the gloomy colour which will ever adhere to it, and from the circumstance of my despondingly throwing it aside, in order to seek consolation in pouring out my heart to you, my beloved friend.

I am now therefore divided from all those connections which are dear to me; and the whole of the earlier part of my life, which memory attaches so closely to my heart, must be torn away from it. It is not that I wish to recal what my conscience condemns; although—and I cannot deny it—in the storm and bitterness of passion, there lies a rapture which still smiles upon me. But does all that belonged to me deserve to be thus thrown away, and for ever removed from me? Yes, for ever; for that which is once past occurs, not in the same manner again. Were I now to return, though I have been absent only so short a time, I should find already another state of things. Did not I possess a native soil, on which I walked with the consciousness that my peculiar character and intellectual attainments were acquired there? Had not I relatives and friends, and was not I able to rejoice all the day at the prospect of forming one of their cheerful circle in the evening? My heart is rent, and is ready to bleed, that all this is gone, no more to return.

You say it must bleed for the fault I have committed. Alas, alas ! I am still so weak, that I am much more grieved at the loss of my happiness, than at the aberrations which have deprived me of it.

To be alone ; to have no one who longs after us—none whom we desire ; to stand in no connection with the objects which pass before us, whether pleasing or painful ; to see before us no pleasing future, the realization of which, by the continuance of present feeling, might form one cheering whole ; to be ever looking back, with a fixed eye, upon the past, which is already dead, and regards us in return with a strange and spectral look, and to feel at every breath, and at every painful vibration of the heart, that it was, and is no more ;—what is this ? is it not hell ?

## LETTER IV.

*April, 1826.*

AFTER having written to you thrice in a short space of time, and vainly expecting, for several months, an answer from you, I had already begun to repent of the importunity with which I had made you the confidant of my sorrows. A letter from you has now withdrawn me from such painful reflections. Accept my most heartfelt thanks for the friendly, cordial, and yet powerful and manly sentiments expressed in it. You are astonished at my being able to conceal from you so much suffering, of which you had no idea. But, dearest friend, who has ever really known or been desirous of knowing, since the day of my birth, that which was passing within me? I do not refer to you; for what could you have asked me during our brief intercourse, or what could I have related to you in so short a space of time? But besides yourself, none of my friends have sympathized with me, however gladly I would have listened to the effusions of their hearts. In consequence of this indifference, I have been rendered timid, and have digested in my own heart that which took place

there. Outwardly, I have assumed the appearance of having no heart, and have not ventured to show that I felt either pleasure or pain. How beneficial is it to my poor reserved heart to be permitted to speak ; and that you are willing to listen to it ! You shall know everything that I think and feel ; I will converse with you as with myself.

There is a theatre of some note in this place, and I have visited it. The words drama and theatre I have never been able, since my infancy, to pronounce without enthusiasm. We sit before the veiled stage with the anticipation of all that is laughable, amiable, and sublime in character—all the wonderful sport of chance, and the dreadful catastrophes of fate, which will soon unfold themselves to our view. The curtain ascends ; and, behold ! in the midst of this every-day world, a new one, in which the quintessence of the former is compressed. And whilst looking into it with rapturous feelings, I possess, at the same time, a social pleasure ; I find myself amongst a number of others, who have been brought to the place by a similar inclination, and all my sensations are heightened, since so many others partake of them with me.

Hitherto, I had only been present at a French theatre ; and although I was acquainted with the dramatic poesy of the Greeks, Spaniards, and Germans, and was on my guard against overvaluing that

of the French, yet I have always regarded it as a genuine fruit of the French character and spirit, and therefore as something laudable. In their tragedies, representation, passion, and decision of mind prevail, as in the people themselves; the farce—for this must not be wanting in dramatic literature—interests us by its mirthfulness, wit, and, not unfrequently, by an inexhaustible comic humour. The pieces which lie between these, present to us a spirited and well executed picture of social life; and the performance perfectly corresponds with these qualities. The feelings are not only intended to be touched and excited, but the demands of the understanding must be attended to as much as possible; the excitement of the imagination is less to be considered. Every thing must proceed rapidly. The feelings once awakened, must not be suffered to cool: hence the scene continues unchanged; the curtain, after having been once drawn up, does not fall before the end of the piece; the divisions of the intervening acts are indicated by a few strokes upon the violin; the actors manifest, if not always genius, yet generally diligence, emulation, refinement, and social polish; the auditory, attentive, susceptible, easily excited, not unfrequently restless and passionate, continues in constant and lively reciprocity of feeling with them; and each spectator, although he may not be tasting any

particular enjoyment of art, is notwithstanding engaged for some hours in a manner which is pleasing to him.

How very different, said I to myself, on my arrival here—how very different to the pleasure I felt in the French theatre—will be the rapture which awaits me in the German ! There I shall see the *chef-d'œuvres* of Schiller ; and many of Shakspeare's tragedies, which are so nearly allied to the spirit of the Germans, and so admirably translated by them, that they seem to belong to their literature ! Whole weeks, however, passed away ; not one of Schiller's or Shakspeare's pieces was given ; and I was at length obliged to go to the theatre at a venture.

I went thither rather early, and saw the people assemble. Their disturbance and movements seemed at an end as soon as they had taken their places, and there were no further signs of a lively interest observable in them. The piece, indeed, was not calculated to produce the latter, any more than the actors ; who, although not deficient in talent, were wanting in tact, energy, and due instruction, and pleased me the less, because, to judge from their self-complacency and affected tone, they were uncommonly well pleased with themselves. From the stage, which did not present any thing very rational, I sometimes cast a look upon the ranks of the spectators behind



me. There they sat, perfectly grave, without giving any sign of approbation or displeasure ; and the question naturally occurred to me, why they came thither ? Could not each of them have had more enjoyment at home ? If any thing like interest had been excited at the end of an act, there was an abundance of time, in the long space between the falling of the curtain and its being drawn up again, for the spectators to forget what they had seen, and to assume a completely different tone of mind. A ballet followed the comedy. The dancers were utterly incapable of exciting any interest in me. I constantly thought within myself, ‘ These are probably very good domestic characters ;’ and felt constrained to lament with them the necessity which compelled them to dance, and do that for which they did not seem constructed.

I know not what sort of evil spirit has taken up his abode in this theatre. All the painful feelings, remiscences, and cares, from which I had hoped to escape, crowded forth in the frequent moments of listlessness and tedium, in order to steal into and torment my mind. The feeling of disgust and vexation with which I saw the building empty itself, the lamps extinguished which had given light to the flimsy amusement, the people depart as indifferent as they came, and with which I returned to my lonely room at the inn—I cannot describe. And then to reflect

that the same thing which occasioned me such disagreeable feelings that evening, was continually repeated on a larger scale ; that even in the world, and that which is connected with it, people crowd, press, and push one another, until they have found a place where they can conveniently settle themselves ; that those who appear upon the stage, and are enveloped in the tinsel of fame and grandeur, feel, in fact, much more uncomfortable than those who sit below them ; that the whole terminates with mutual dissatisfaction and thorough disgust ; that the lights are then extinguished, and every one goes home in the dark, the darkness of death, to his grave !—as I to my room, where my wax taper shone upon me like a sepulchral lamp upon the lonely corpse !



## LETTER V.

ALTHOUGH none of Schiller's tragedies have hitherto been given, yet there have been such as were performed with enthusiasm by the actors, and by which the audience seemed also to be captivated ; which, I must confess, have even affected and excited me—tragedies in which, beside the visible performers, an invisible actor, often spoken of under the name of Fate, seems to play his part ; and who is generally represented on the stage itself by a dagger introduced in a screen—tragedies, in which it might be apprehended that the stage could transform itself into a scaffold, and which, for the satisfaction of the spectators, would at least end with the suicide of the principal characters.

Whilst occupied with these reflections, I was seated close to a neatly dressed young man of good figure, who, as I afterwards learned, was either a councillor of finance or of justice, and who not unfrequently looked at me, in order to read in my eyes the reflection of his transports ; and who might in fact have found something of a similar nature in them. Thus we became acquainted, and I gladly agreed to his proposi-

tion to sup together, after the play, at a restaurateur's. That which we had just been witnessing, naturally became the subject of conversation during our meal.

After having paid a due tribute of approbation to the actors, the well-sounding verses, and the single, surprising, and affecting scenes, my new acquaintance began, with considerable animation, as follows :—

“ But that which delights me most in this tragedy, and in some others which are written in the same spirit, is, that they restore to us so completely, and I might almost say in a superior light, the spirit of Grecian tragedy, which is in reality the spirit of the whole species.”

“ And what is that ? ” inquired I.

“ What else,” replied he, “ than Fate ; which, by strange associations, carries men away to the commission of crimes, and plunges the innocent with the guilty into one common destruction.”

“ The Germans,” rejoined I, “ have attained to such a thorough knowledge of Grecian antiquity, that they certainly understand the fundamental ideas of the Grecian works of art, and particularly of their tragedies, better than is elsewhere the case. However, I should not like to adduce, as a proof of this, the idea of fate as represented in the piece the performance of which we have just witnessed.”

“ Why not ? ” asked he.

“Because it is by no means necessary, either in that individual piece, or in tragedy generally. Place persons of decided character and violent passions in situations, which present insurmountable obstacles to that which they so violently and obstinately desire, and let these passions struggle with the circumstances in which the individual is placed ; this struggle is tragedy, and there is no need of the introduction of fate into the piece.”

“You are still standing,” replied the young councillor, “on the subordinate footing of French tragedy. We Germans have elevated ourselves to a higher one.”

“And then,” continued I, “I am ignorant why any mention should be made of fate in tragedies, since it is spoken of no where else, and believed by no one. The Greeks believed in an obscure power, which ruled over gods and men ; and tragedy—this representation of human life in its most exalted references—would not have satisfied them, if that idea had not been introduced. But this idea no longer predominates in the minds of men. The poet believes in it as little as his auditory ; then why call it forth ?”

“There you are under a mistake,” said the young councillor ; “there are many who now believe in it.” Whilst he was uttering what follows, during which he elevated his voice more than was necessary, I was not a little embarrassed, on observing how those who were

supping in the same room directed their eyes to the "little table in the corner" at which we were sitting, and began to listen to our conversation. "Do you know," continued he, "that German poesy has abandoned that common and vulgar way of representing only that which is visible and finite, and in happy connection with philosophy, which simultaneously awoke with it, has elevated itself to that which is infinite, which extends and rules over all things."

"By that which you call infinite," inquired I, in as low a tone as possible, "do you mean God, or some thing else?"

"God, to be sure," answered the former; "that is, that which ought always to have been called God; that unity of things, which, bound by no personality, produces all things, and draws them back into itself with an iron necessity. In the Jewish and Christian religion, this sublime idea has descended to the vulgar conceptions of men, and transformed itself into a humanly personal and susceptible God; although it cannot be denied, that in the history of the New Testament the sway of this universal principle is often represented in striking allegories."

"The history of the New Testament," answered I, "is either true or false. I will not decide the point; but I never thought that it was to be regarded as a mere allegory?"

Meanwhile, a man of about thirty years of age, who had something bold and daring in his look, approached our table from one of the others, and said to the councillor, whilst clapping him on the shoulder, in a more ironical than friendly tone, "Do you know, friend, that you are reviewed?"

The councillor, concerning whom I thus unexpectedly heard that he was a writer and a poet, shrunk together at this salutation, and inquired, with a transient blush, where his book had been reviewed, and whether favourably or not?

A conversation now commenced between the councillor and the other, by means of which I became acquainted with the chief of the reviewing establishments in Germany, the number of which is not small; the parties into which the writers of the present day are divided; and their reciprocal bitterness, to which they not unfrequently give vent by criticising each other. The councillor, whose work had been reviewed, attacked criticism in general. The reviewer took it under his protection, and said, "What would literature be without criticism? You must at least confess, that our journals are the safest barrier which we can oppose to the religious enthusiasm which is so current."

During this conversation, which became very ani-

mated by means of the wine, which was frequently called for by both, I left them ; and was glad, in the solitude of my apartment, gradually to recover from the disordered state of feeling in which it had placed me.

.

## LETTER VI.

HAVING found no gratification at the theatre, I have entirely ceased visiting it. My life is consequently become still more solitary; I scarcely ever appear amongst men. When anxiety and uneasiness do not seize me—which is frequently the case during the day—and drive me up and down the streets, until the inward tumult subsides through bodily weakness—I am constantly in my apartment, occupied with re-perusing the German poets I am already acquainted with, by turns.

My state at the time I first knew them was very different from what it is at present. My mind was then tranquil; I was satisfied with my situation and my efforts; my mode of life had something fixed and settled. Poesy was added to it as a crown, as an ornament, and an embellishment. It gave a higher impetus to my feelings, and imparted a sweet longing to my heart; more I did not desire, and this it yielded me. I now expect very different things from it: poesy and poets are to recompense me for what I have lost; are to furnish a firm basis for my anxious and vacillating existence; and yet even Göethe and



Schiller—the greatest of them, and the two whom I most admire—are certainly unable to afford it me.

Many a poem delights me still, as in former times ; less, indeed, from the impression it at present produces, than from the remembrance of that which I felt on reading it in earlier and better times, when I was in a more susceptible state.

Schiller satisfies me the most. I do not, indeed, find in him what I require ; but he is at least acquainted with that feeling of joylessness which preys upon me, and gives it the most dignified and sublime expression. He also seeks to satisfy the hunger of his soul by his esteem for morality, his study of the arts and sciences, and by a grave and melancholy reflection upon earthly things. I know not whether this was able to satisfy such a profound mind, and such a sublime spirit as his ; I only know that it does not satisfy me, and that his harmonious verses, in which he sets before me these specious consolations, leave my heart as empty as before.

I have also diligently studied Göethe. Do not expect me to lay before you a general and impartial view of his talents, their direction, and the works they have produced. A free and tranquil mind is requisite for such an undertaking ; and this I do not possess. That enthusiasm, without which one ought never to speak of a distinguished individual and his



works, is requisite. This enthusiasm, which I formerly felt, now begins to fail me ; my heart becomes increasingly aged and unsusceptible ; and in this state Göethe's excellent poems pass over it without leaving any impression. If I took a pleasure and found satisfaction in the world, the pursuits of mankind, the rapture and the pain of passion, I should know how to appreciate a poesy in which everything that is earthly presents itself to me in such clear and vivid colours. But I have fallen out with the world, my dearest friend, and find no gratification in it, even when Göethe himself brings it in review before me. Of all his writings, his *Faustus* alone has this time extremely affected me ; and I have perceived the awful depth of that poem which was formerly concealed from me. You have jested in a friendly manner at my comparing myself with *Childe Harold*, and have called it a melancholy error. Reprove now, instead of joking ; call it, if you will, a devilish idea ; but I cannot avoid feeling it, and consequently mentioning it to you. There is something of *Faustus* in me. But, after having tasted all this, and found nothing that affords satisfaction, must one necessarily finish with throwing one's self into the arms of the devil ? Is no other solution possible ?

Besides Göethe and Schiller, Germany has furnished uncommonly intellectual, talented, and in part

learned men, who have attempted to give a new direction to poesy. But, in my opinion, they have fallen into a gross error, which has prevented them from producing that effect on their contemporaries, which might have been expected from their great abilities. Poetry, I think, can never be separated from individual feeling and thinking. Only that which the poet has thought and felt—very deeply thought, and very susceptible felt—should be presented to us in his work : he then does not give us fiction, he gives us his real interior life. Those individuals of whom I speak have reversed this order ; they have given free scope to their imaginations, careless how their fictions may agree with their own mode of thinking and feeling, or that of others. Hence their works, which pleased me uncommonly at first, were unable to retain their influence over me. They tore me away from well-known associations, and translated me into a new, gay, and romantic world ; but I could not live in such a world, and it vanished from my view like the delusive form conjured up by a magician. The obscure and mysterious ideas, or brilliant forms, which these poets have borrowed from the Christian religion, and especially the Catholic church, belong to these magic illusions. I soon felt, that even these are only truly poetic when credence is attached to them. But do I believe them ? Do these individuals themselves believe them ?

## LETTER VII.

You are in the right, my dearest friend—man is not destined to live entirely separate from those of his own species, and alone. He is better able to bear himself this heaviest of burdens which is imposed upon him, when others aid him in bearing it. We withdraw, impelled by pride and melancholy, into solitude; and find, in the end, that it is preferable to pass the time with others, even with the most superficial and common class of mankind, than to be always alone. I have therefore, at your advice, come forth from the retirement in which I had hitherto lived, and have delivered the letters of recommendation, with which I was abundantly provided—particularly for my present abode. It cost a struggle, and this struggle is renewed every time I prepare for going into company. However, I confess I have not unfrequently been soothed, and returned home in a better frame of mind.

Here, in this country, as far as I have been able to observe the company, especially in the larger circles, little provision is made for the gratification which arises from the mutual and animated communication

of ideas. Such a communication seems to exist only in the smaller circles, where those who are of similar sentiments, and already on friendly terms with each other, unite more closely. In general, the men, whether merchants or literati, are reserved ; and every one seems to wish that the other would bring forward the result of his observations, and he himself be permitted to retain his own. Perhaps in this they do well ; for from the discussion, if it arises, a dispute but too soon ensues, which is conducted with no great forbearance. The art of arranging a company in such a manner, that elements which are in diametrical opposition do not come into contact with each other, is but little practised here ; and hence it is so much the more requisite to have recourse to other means of supplying entertainment. One of the most favourite kinds is music, and especially singing, to which I am indebted for many a truly delightful hour, on occasions when I anticipated nothing but painful wearisomeness. There is something more heartfelt and affecting in the singing at this place, than I have found or felt elsewhere. The Germans, generally speaking, seem formed more for singing, and the French for speaking. Hence the former excel in lyric poetry, and the latter in the drama.

But alas ! singing is not the only representative of amusement ; and it is wonderful how many things are

invented, in order to satisfy the want of sociability which is vividly felt. A company is frequently collected together solely for the purpose of hearing a poet rehearse his productions. Poems are recited, comedies performed, and dramatic pieces read, so that each of those present undertakes a part, and is first an actor, and then a spectator. Pictures are represented by living individuals, who as eagerly seek to imitate some well-known piece of art in costume and gesture, as art is wont to strive to imitate nature.

I have been introduced to company of a very particular kind. It was at the house of an individual, who is highly respected here. The company consisted of both ladies and gentlemen, and likewise of several young officers. One of the gentlemen seemed known to me; it was the same young councillor whom I had met at the theatre, and whom I have mentioned in a previous letter. His obsequious conduct towards the master of the house, led me to infer that he stood in a subordinate official situation to him. The conversation, without being lively, had something cordial; and each one treated the other in a particularly friendly manner. This was also the case with respect to myself; it was evidently the intention to render me comfortable, and it proved successful. In this endeavour, M. von Steindorf, a government

councillor, exceeded all the rest. I felt attracted towards him, as he did towards me; and I have a presentiment that, next to you, he will become my dearest friend.

The conversation touched slightly upon many of the occurrences of the day, and many of the affairs of the state and the church; the latter seemed to excite by far the warmest interest. Opinions were expressed upon everything with discrimination and freedom, but at the same time with mildness. "We may certainly expect from you," said a lady, addressing herself to me, "circumstantial and authentic accounts respecting the movements of the true or imaginary fanaticism, which is said to be abroad in your native land." This placed me in an extremely embarrassing situation. I was suddenly called upon to take an active part in a conversation to which I had hitherto been only an attentive listener. I had to speak upon events, of which, though I had indeed heard, yet which I had never thought worthy of any particular attention; and, besides this, I was thus led into the sphere of religion, to which my reflections were still strangers. I had, until that moment, formed no opinion concerning the things that had reference to it; and this I felt ashamed to confess. Nor did I do so, although I stated my ignorance of the circumstances concerning which I was asked. This statement



excited universal surprise ; a pause in the conversation ensued, and my embarrassment was indescribable ; it was not however of long duration, for Steindorf very expertly gave the conversation another direction.

It soon turned upon music, which afforded me an opportunity of expressing my great admiration of Glück, and particularly of his *Iphigenia of Tauris* ; of which, I mentioned that I had shortly before heard some parts performed in a private house. My judgment respecting Glück proved to be the opinion of all. Called upon by the lady of the house, a gentleman sat down to the piano-forte, and a young lady sang several pieces from the works of that composer, with deep feeling and well-toned voice. The remark was made, that Glück's compositions, by their simplicity, dignity, and feeling, were nearly allied to sacred music ; and mention being made of Pergolese's "*Stabat Mater*," some passages in it were also performed. The company now began to speak of church-music ; and to mention the most approved melodies and hymn-tunes. One of these melodies, observed Steindorf, was set to a hymn, to which he had paid previously little attention, but which he had read that morning with great edification. A number of hymn-books were immediately produced ; the gentleman who had played the air from Glück, sat down again to the instrument, and played the tune, which was sung by the company. There

were only two who did not join in the singing—myself and the young councillor. I have never sung ; for I possess neither ear nor voice ; the thing was at the same time strange and unwonted, so that I felt a degree of embarrassment. However, I attentively followed one of the books which had fallen to the share of the young councillor and myself, and which both of us held in our hands before us. His countenance exhibited a singular expression of feature, by which, as it seemed, he wished to communicate with me, and give me to perceive his rage at the circumstance.

When the company separated, and I was already at some distance from the house, I was overtaken in the street by the young councillor, who, almost choked with passion, exclaimed, “I never expected in all my life to have been present at a conventicle.”

“What is a conventicle ?” asked I.

“An assembly of pietists,” answered he.

“And what are pietists ?” was my next question.

“You must be a great stranger in this country,” answered he, astonished and chagrined. “They are just such people as those with whom we have been in company.”

“Therefore polished, kind, amiable people,” continued I ; “as for instance, Mr. von Steindorf and his lady.”



“ Polished, kind, amiable ! ” exclaimed he passionately, “ they are ridiculous, narrow-minded, intolerable people. Humility on their lips, and the idol of pride in their hearts !—speak of nothing but love, and are cold as ice !—and blame, judge, and condemn every one who does not belong to their circle.”

“ Give truth the glory,” said I. “ During the whole evening not a single word of the kind has been spoken ; and they were uncommonly friendly to us both, whom they most probably did not regard as of their number.”

“ And can *you* bear their horrible psalm-singing ? ” continued he.

“ It is the first time in my life,” rejoined I, “ that I have been in a private circle where hymns were sung. Yet as recourse is had to so many means of supplying the want of conversation—for which there is little talent and ability here—I do not see why this should be excluded.”

“ I admire your moderation,” exclaimed he ; “ but the unceasing litany of sin and redemption in their hymns and conversation—what do you say to *them* ? Do you believe in such things ? ”

“ Whether it is an erroneous idea,” rejoined I, “ which has governed mankind during so many centuries, or whether it is some superior necessity which gives their thoughts and feelings this form, I know

not ; I do not decide. But this I must say, that the exhibition of Christian piety has never been intolerable to me ; and it reminds me of my parents, who were also pious Christians. Nay, I could sometimes even envy such people."

" Envy them ! " exclaimed he. " Is it possible ! "

" Yes ; " said I, " for they have something on which they can support themselves ; hence they possess an inward serenity of which others are deficient."

Thus we parted, not a little dissatisfied with each other. However, the peace which pervaded the circle we had left, seemed to have in some measure expanded itself over me.

## LETTER VIII.

*May, 1826.*

WHAT avails dissipation ? Of what use is it to seek an alleviation of my sorrow in books and society ? These remedies avail only for a short time, and the evil grows worse with every relapse.

M. von Steindorf—whom I met, not only in the circle I lately described to you, but also on several other similar occasions, and whom I have likewise visited in his own house—invited me to take a ride with him to one of the royal summer residences a few miles off. I accompanied him and his lady in one carriage, and the rest of the company followed in two or three other vehicles. The place is really beautiful, and the pleasing situation of the garden, though destitute of any great natural advantages, has been tastefully improved. The weather was uncommonly cheerful and refreshing ; a mild and gentle sunshine shed itself over and irradiated everything, exhibiting to view the blessings which nature had scattered over the whole of the wide plain, which was overlooked from several pleasing points of view.

The day was spent in the open air, and we walked

about upon the spacious lawns, under groves of shady fir and other trees. Cheerfulness, which partook as much of witty jocoseness as of serious reflection, pervaded the company, with the exception of myself—I was far from participating in it.

I know not whether I am able to make another feel and perceive what I experienced. Have you ever felt cramp in the chest? How it draws the parts within together with an obtuse pain, and air finds no passage through the contracted channels of respiration! Thus was I suddenly seized in the interior of my soul. A moment before, I had felt perfectly comfortable; all at once my heart was pressed together by an indescribable melancholy. The repose and serenity which pervaded all nature, did not communicate this feeling to me, but the opposite. He who crosses a church-yard at the midnight hour, could not be under greater trepidation than that which I felt on one of the finest days in spring. I was entirely carried away from the scenes around me, and transported to a distance, into the past. I was forcibly compelled to turn my eyes wherever there was anything of a tormenting nature for me in the wide world, and wherever there was anything in the past of which I repented. All the reproach which had ever been made me, or could have been cast upon me, sounded in my ears; and I was forced to listen to it. Thus one

hour after another passed away in increasing and indescribable horror. I was, nevertheless, able to speak, and to bear a part—though not a lively one—in the conversation. Nor did I yield myself up to melancholy, like a stripling ; I struggled, I strove to shake it off ; but it was stronger than I. At length I could bear it no longer. I felt compelled to leave the company. I pleaded as an excuse, that in my native country I had accustomed myself to walk for many miles together, and that my health had suffered from omitting this salutary exercise in Germany ; that I now felt particularly impelled to it, and wished, in order not to reach home too late, to set out immediately. The company did not particularly urge me to give up the plan ; I was soon on the road with myself alone ; but my inward torment was not in the least allayed. With the approach of night, and the fatigue I began to feel—for the way was long—my mental anguish and disgust at life increased. The carriages of our company overtook me at the gates of the town ; and as they drove past me, I heard them cheerfully conversing and laughing. None of them observed me ; for it was already dark ; besides—what am I to them ? or what are they to me ?

## LETTER IX.

I CAN no longer bear it ; it is horrible ; it is enough to make one wish for death ! It cannot continue thus ; it must end in lunacy or an act of desperation.

There are none—however I may once have loved and valued them ; not excepting yourself, my friend—against whom I do not feel exasperation, repugnance, and rage. I figure them to myself in idea ; and the mortification they have caused me, and the injustice they have done me, immediately occur to me. I state these things to them, and overwhelm them with reproaches. They defend themselves ; I become more violent ; and excite myself by fighting with shadows in this manner to such a degree, that I suddenly spring up from my seat, breathless with agitation.

I spare myself the least of all. When I take a retrospect of my past life, and call to mind how often I have trifled with my happiness ; how often I have made myself the laughing stock of men ; how often I have done wrong, and received no benefit from it—I am then scarcely able to refrain, like *Œdipus* in the tragedy, from raging against my own person.

If I have not to do with myself or other individuals, my thoughts wander, and seek out the most horrible scenes which the world can yield. I conceive myself standing on the scaffold; I see them bring forth the malefactor, throw him down, and—Immediately afterwards it is myself, to whom all this occurs. Or else I am lying apparently dead, in a coffin, and awake in the night of the grave. My thoughts suddenly revert from works of the most cheerful nature and the most interesting studies—I myself know not how—to those objects which possess, with reference to me, such a horribly attracting power.

When I fall asleep, it is as if a demon sat before me and grinned at me, who changes himself from one dreadful form into another, and who once more presents to my confused thoughts that which is the most revolting and appalling, in order that I may take it with me into the world of dreams.

Some time ago, the city was full of a suicide which had been committed. The individual had distinguished himself in many respects, and in particular by considerable poetical talent. He goes to a wood, places himself under a tree, discharges his pistol, and is no more. The populace crowded out of the city to see the corpse, and invented a multitude of fables concerning his being in want of money, having been unfortunate in love, &c., as the cause of the fatal act.



If a man can but be satisfied with himself, he may also be so with the want of money and the most unhappy love-affair ; but when he can no longer bear himself, he is not far from the pistol or the rope.

Some time ago, I fell asleep more quietly than usual. After the night was past, and with the morning dawn, a greater coolness and exhaustion had come over me. Sweet moment, thought I ; whilst a pleasing shiver thrilled through me, and my limbs extended themselves at their ease. Sweet moment, when the cold shiver of death shall pervade me, and my body shall stretch itself out to take its final repose, from which we awake no more !



## LETTER X.

I AM not such a child, or weakling, or so foolish, as not to be struck with my own state, reflect upon it, and survey the causes which have produced it.

I alone bear all the blame. I am not, indeed, like many others—not so moderate in my inclinations, nor do I so easily accommodate myself to that which has been taken for granted, and established by the mass of mankind. But this feeling, which so easily transgresses its bounds, is capable of being modified; in order to which, clear, immutably established principles are requisite, concerning good and evil, right and wrong, things which are allowable and that which is prohibited. Instead of forming such principles within me, I suffered myself to be guided by my inclinations; which at one time discarded that which they had felt to be a duty at another, as soon as it opposed their gratification; and which was assisted by a penetrating acuteness, which in its fallacious decisions degraded the most sacred things, and elevated the most vile. Thus I followed what I called my heart, and was even proud of recognizing no bounds prescribed by duty or circumstances. The power which I had scorned now

avenges itself upon me. I have been cast out by those social relations, to which I refused to give due deference; and almost all connection between me and human society is terminated. I am now limited to myself: and in this solitude, and thus standing alone, my too powerful feelings throw themselves back upon me, and rack and destroy my mind.

But how is the evil to be removed? I know not; every remedy which presents itself immediately seems insufficient to me; and the fruitlessness of reflecting upon the subject, brings me almost to despair. Shall I make enjoyment the principal aim of my existence, and seek to fill up every hour, from morning till night, with the pleasures of sense or of intellect? Shall I become a companion of those, who, in brutality and levity, pursue only the grosser enjoyments? Or avoiding these debasing paths, shall I strive to render myself an acceptable and indispensable member in many a polished and well-bred circle? Shall I spend the evening hours of Monday at a ball—of Tuesday at the gaming-table—of Wednesday at the theatre? On Thursday shall I read or hear my own poetical productions, or those of others? Shall I, on Friday, set on foot the most witty games, and make myself prominent in each of them by my cheerfulness and my comic remarks? Shall I act a comedy on Saturday? On Sunday amuse a company with the tricks

of jugglers and conjurors ; and, on Monday, recommence the same round of diversion ? I cannot include myself amongst the happy or unhappy mortals, who can satisfy themselves with these frivolous, worthless, and unintellectual pursuits : I would rather bear my solitary torments all my life long, than seek to escape from them in such a manner. Or supposing I were to seek for something which would affect me still more powerfully, and artificially ingraft an inclination, or a passion upon myself—this may be done, and upon this point I might say much—and suffer myself to be carried away with it, careless about the result ? Thank God, I have not yet gone to such a length, as to fall a prey so easily to the stratagems of hell, and not to shrink with horror from a game, in which the devil himself so obviously shuffles the cards !

It would therefore be, perhaps, the most advisable for me to endeavour to procure an official situation ; the direction of my powers to exterior things, and the fatigue attendant upon incumbent official activity, would, perhaps, procure inward peace. Perhaps—and perhaps not. The unsettled conflict within might just as easily render the fetters of an office, and its regular occupation, an intolerable burden ! Nor can I yet give up the hope of obtaining peace of mind by my own struggles ; and I am ashamed of the idea, in the event of success, of receiving it as a present made me by outward circumstances. However, I am not

inactive ; I have formed a plan for my studies, which I carry into effect with zeal and firmness. My time is divided between the study of the ancient languages, and that of history ; and I can boast of having made no inconsiderable progress in both. Does not a prospect present itself here ?—the literature and history of Greece and Rome, and add to these, ancient and modern philosophy—is not this a world capable of attracting and occupying the whole of my mental powers and faculties, and thus afford complete satisfaction to the soul ? A world, indeed—and a glorious one for him whose mind and heart are regulated, and who has placed himself in the true position as it respects those invisible powers which assail his heart. But this is not the case with me, and, therefore, those studies are really nothing more than a means of killing the time, although the best of those methods which have been hitherto invented.

There is still one thing left, and that is, poetry ! I love it ; I have made attempts at it, which were not unsuccessful ; now were I to devote all my powers and efforts to it, would it not lead to such a height as would secure me from all tormenting influences ? I have thought so, and made the attempt ; and found that even this was a futile hope. The sole cause of this did not lie in the weakness of my poetical talent, which in other respects I gladly acknowledge ; others possess it perhaps not in a higher degree ; but there

is in them an independent power, the development of which is only promoted or restrained by the state of the whole mind. In my case, the inclinations and ability to compose has never been anything else than my inward life; if the latter had remained untouched by the poison of the world, it might perhaps have produced many a poetical flower and much fruit. But I have wasted that power of the spirit and that warmth of the heart in the foolish and confused movement of the passions which are necessary for conceiving a poetical idea, forming it, and expressing it in words. Like the visionary forms towards which a dreamer stretches out his hands, but cannot reach—so the forms which arise in my imagination pass by in the twilight of distance, and disappear as soon as I wish to seize and retain them. Inspiration, sacred flame! thou no longer burstest forth from the profaned sanctuary of my heart; and since thou hast forsaken it, I perceive, most clearly and painfully, how inanimate and dead it is.

Thus I really know not what to do. I condemn the past, and see no light to illumine the future, no path to lead me through its wildness. If any thing has taken firm hold of me, it is the consciousness that the injunctions of conscience cannot be transgressed with impunity, and the resolution to obey its decisions as much as possible in future.

## LETTER XI.

20th June 1828.

REJOICE with me, my dear friend. Something has at length sprung up within me, which I venture to call hope. You will learn how this has taken place, when I give you an account of one of my days—perhaps the most important of my life.

On the day to which I allude (it was the 18th of June) I entered my study at an early hour. The sun, which for some days had been obscured by a gloomy sky, shone in a very bright and friendly manner into the room, and I could not possibly be unsusceptible of the cheerful morning salutation which it offered me. I approached the open window, into which the air of summer, cooled by a gentle breeze, entered with its rays; and I surveyed the surrounding scenery, which I had never before beheld clothed in such lively colours, and which now for the first time afforded me pleasure. I am residing on the banks of a broad and magnificent stream, which intersects the town; the opposite shore is planted with trees, over the summits of which the lofty Gothic spires of the principal church of the place, not far from the stream,



form a conspicuous object. I had delighted myself for a while in surveying the stream, when suddenly the full-toned peal of the cathedral bells burst upon my ear, announcing the commencement of early worship. I was now reminded—for I had for a long time been in the habit of paying no attention to the difference of days—that it was Sunday, and this thought caused me pleasure. I saw the people under the shade of the trees, repairing to church; and soon heard from the latter, the solemn tones of the organ and the choral singing of the congregation.

On turning away from the window, in order to commence my labours for the day, it occurred to me—and a reference to the calendar assured me of it—that the day which had commenced so cheerfully was the 18th of June, and my birth-day. This reflection filled me with a melancholy but not painful feeling. I sat down, and leaned my head on my hand. I surveyed the years that were past, as far as I could penetrate into them; and called to mind under what peculiar circumstances, and with what proofs of affection and friendship, that day had formerly been celebrated by my parents and friends. ‘On the day therefore,’ said I to myself, ‘on which I am twenty-eight years old, I receive no tokens of sympathy either from my parents—for they are dead; or from my friends—for they have forgotten me. I am alone,



quite alone, in a foreign land. ‘But,’ added I immediately, ‘is not this bright sunshine, this pealing of the bells, and these swelling notes of the organ, a celebration of my birth-day; and cannot that which the present denies me, be compensated by the remembrance of the past?’

I just then recollected, that though I had left many things behind me, which were good and useful, in consequence of my hasty departure; yet I had taken with me a birth-day present, made me by my parents, which was particularly dear to me. I resolved, therefore, immediately to seek it; and consequently Plato, who was already lying open, and the apparatus of translations and commentaries belonging to it, were closed and laid aside. I soon found what I sought. It was a beautifully printed and sumptuously bound Bible, with the striking likenesses of my father and mother, one of which was placed at the beginning and the other at the end of the book. I gazed long upon these portraits, and the sight of them affected me deeply. My parents seemed to be near me, for the purpose of bringing me their salutations and good wishes. Between my father’s picture and the title-page of the Bible, was a leaf written upon by my father, which I had frequently read, but without any particular impression; for good sentiments require a favourable season, and the latter had now arrived.

The following is what he had written :—

“ On the day that you are twenty years old, my beloved son, your parents present you with this Bible and their likenesses ; and wish that both may ever be to you a pleasing and a precious gift. You will find in the Bible safe and divine directions how to obtain supreme blessings, virtue and true happiness ; and in our portraits you see the features of those who are more solicitous than any other individuals in the world for your temporal and spiritual welfare. As long as we are upon earth, beloved son, you will certainly have recourse to us your parents, next to God and his word, as often as you need counsel and comfort. But when at length we shall be with you no more, do not on that account esteem yourself forsaken. You have a Father in heaven, who will protect you, if you continue faithful to him ; and in his word you will continually find comfort in affliction, and encouragement to strive for the attainment of that bright world, at which the grace of God assists us to arrive, and where we hope again to meet you, our beloved son.”

On reading these words, I felt as I had never done in my life before. I began to tremble, weep, and sob aloud. The remembrance of my parents—of the years of my childhood, which were rendered so happy by their affection—the grief at my aberrations and at my present joyless *solitude*—all this, combined in one name-

less feeling, assailed me, and shook me to my centre. First, one of these objects, and then another, presented itself in a lively manner to my view ; and each of them caused me a flood of tears. These images then grew obscure, they retreated into the background ; but still I did not cease to weep ; my tears flowed only the more copiously, because I was no longer conscious why I shed them. I wept for the pleasure I took in weeping ; my heart was strongly and increasingly shaken by an invisible power, and filled with a still profounder melancholy. It is possible that in my infantile years I may have wept as copiously and bitterly ; but since that period, with the exception of the time when I lost my parents, my eyes had continued dry ; and though my heart had experienced many other emotions, yet it had never been thus shaken to its centre. A considerable space of time had elapsed, and this tempest and pressure of feeling had already begun to subside, when suddenly the pealing of the bells for the morning service began, still more powerfully and sonorously than had seemed to be the case at an earlier hour. I sprang up, as if terrified ; my heart quivered at every tone. It seemed to me as if I heard the voice of my parents in the sound of the bells, who reproached me for having taken the Bible, they had given me eight years before, scarcely once into my hands during the whole of that long period. I took up the Bible ; opened it at the com-

mencement of the New Testament, began to read; and during that and the following days did nothing else but read it, and sought to arrange and retain the rich abundance of ideas and feelings which flowed in upon me.

If at other times, my dearest friend, I have felt the necessity of pouring out my heart in complaints to you—it now impels me, much more strongly, to communicate to you every thing which passes in my mind. I think I have now reached the turning-point, and am commencing a new and better period of my life, in which I shall perhaps be less unworthy of your affection and friendship.

## LETTER XII.

THERE is something extremely strange and wonderful connected with the reading of the Bible ! I was not altogether ignorant of its contents, as you may imagine, in consequence of previous instruction : for I had been occasionally obliged to read it to my mother, and at school ; and whilst receiving religious instruction passages from it were explained. If ever a book seemed dry to me formerly, it was the Bible ; for though I felt no repugnance towards it, yet there was not the smallest thing in it that attracted me, or touched my heart. That pleasing state, in which the mind longs for the book, and in which the book gives the mind a treasure of ideas and feelings, did not occur in my case. I read the Bible without reading it, or at least without understanding it ; or else, if I understood it, the words only entered into my understanding, but never penetrated into my heart. Without doubting the history of Jesus, I did not feel affected by it : Christ, I thought, had lived, acted, and spoken for his contemporaries ; but he did not live, act, and speak for me. I succeeded still worse in an attempt I once made to investigate the connection of ideas in some

of the discourses of Jesus, quoted by John, and in some of the Epistles of Paul ; and nothing but a narcotic vapour, which stupefied and paralyzed the powers of my soul, arose from thus reading and torturing the words of Scripture.

Who is it that has all at once unfolded this closed book to me ?—who has transformed the barren sandy waste into a meadow, filled with bubbling springs of water ?—who causes every word to rise up as a winged and soaring spirit, and find the way to my heart ? In the first ravening of my hunger, I read the New Testament from beginning to end ; I can now spend almost as long a time on a single passage as was required for this purpose. There is much that I do not understand, and much is entirely incomprehensible to me. But every thing fills me with reverence and love, and attracts me. I awake in the morning with the idea that pleasure is awaiting me, and I take up my Bible. In the evening I rejoice no longer, as formerly, at sinking into unconsciousness ; but conclude my day with the Bible, as with a beloved friend. How am I to reconcile this—that it was formerly nothing to me, and that it is now everything ? Undoubtedly thus : it is the word of God ; God must also give the key to it himself. We do not see the starry heavens which he created, unless he dispels the clouds which cover them.



I have become another man in the space of a few days. How poor, how inwardly dead I was, I have already complained to you myself. The marrow seemed to me to be dried in my bones. My spirit, languishing in its own barrenness, had always the desire, but never the power, to follow out an idea ; it sank to the earth like a bird that has been shot in the wing. That which now passes within me I can best bring before you under the figure of a fountain. What a slothful mass is water ! Is it possible for it to be driven up above the roofs of houses and the loftiest spires ? The powerful wheels of the machine are put in motion ; they beat upon the foaming waters of the stream, and drive them into the pipes. Arrived at the opening of the basin, the mighty column of water rushes forth, elevating itself slowly at first, and gradually, as if hesitating between heaven and earth. Suddenly, the direction is decided ; gravitation is overcome ; a column of water, composed of millions of drops, flies bubbling aloft towards the azure heavens, and lingers there ; masses of foam, which have formed themselves on high into a clustering capital, sink unwillingly down ; but, whilst sinking, form a rainbow with its magnificent colours.

The words of Scripture are the wheels ; my thoughts are the rising column ; the rainbow is the image of heaven, which my spirit bears in it, even when it sinks.



## LETTER XIII.

I CAST myself upon your bosom, and exclaim, in the intoxication of my joy, "I have found it! I have found it! Share my rapture with me! I have found that Christ is God!"

Do not yet ask how I made the discovery; I know not whether I shall ever be able to make it clear either to you or myself. Only thus much I know: The truth that the man Christ Jesus is God, presents itself to me more brilliantly than the light of the sun.

That which, so long as it was not found, tormented me, drove me hither and thither, plunged me from one abyss of melancholy into another, made me hate my life and the light of the sun—that which my spirit longed for, and my heart required—I have found, and feel myself supremely happy in its possession.

How did the learned mathematician, after having found the solution of his problem, rush amongst the people, exclaiming, 'I have found it!' Poor man! thou hadst not found much. But I have found the solution of the great problem respecting the relative position of deity towards humanity; I know what God is towards man; what man ought to be towards

God ; for deity and humanity stand before me in one and the same person.

I have read, in Matthew's gospel, of the pearl of great price, and of the merchant who sold all in order to purchase it. I have purchased this precious pearl ; and it is called ' Christ is God.' I have bought it for nothing ; it has been given to me. And yet I have given up for it everything that unassisted reason has found out, or ever can find out ; and, if necessary, am willing to sacrifice for it, property, health, and life, in order to maintain that Christ is God.

A friend related to me the following circumstance. When he had obtained the consent of the object of his affections, it seemed as if a voice continually resounded within him, ' Thou happy man ! Thou art in possession of such a precious secret ! How much are others to be pitied for knowing nothing of it ! ' Thus I also carry about with me a precious and blissful secret, which however I would gladly communicate to all the world. I awake with joyful feelings ; for my first thought is, ' Christ is God.' If I go out on any business, or to pay a visit, on re-entering my chamber I rejoice that I can again entirely immerse myself in my sweet secret.

## LETTER XIV.

I EXPECTED nothing less than that you would wish to know how it happened that the Divinity of Christ so suddenly became apparent to me. In requiring this, you perhaps hope to obtain a clearer view of this doctrine yourself, from which you are still at some distance, but which calls upon you, with a serious exhortation, to a nearer approach and contemplation. I shall not be able to satisfy your wishes entirely; at least I can only relate, and not bring forward argumentative proof; for I have not procured myself the conviction, but faith has sprung up within me.

I have already mentioned to you the very peculiar attraction and charm, by which the writings of the New Testament captivated my mind; this mysterious influence emanated from the person of Jesus, whom they displayed to me. I have never, as the Lord knows, felt any repugnance to the Saviour; on the contrary, I have venerated him; but this veneration was cold; it was as if we had no reference to each other. His words might be applicable to others, but they were not so to me; they had no effect upon me. All at once, when I lately began to read, every word

seemed addressed to me, and he appeared to have me in view, and to regard me with a look of sympathy, as if he pitied my misery. Oh what have I felt, whilst perusing those passages in which he comforts those that mourn, and binds up the hearts which are broken by penitence! Jesus was not only the same who lived eighteen hundred years ago in Judea—but I felt that he still lived, that he stood before me, sought me, and began to hold converse with me.

With respect to what has since occurred, Jesus has inflamed my heart more and more; when I hear him speak, I am compelled to banish every other thought, in order to apprehend his words with entire simplicity of heart; and whenever I thought I understood that he asserted or required anything of me, it would have seemed impious, had I hesitated to believe or obey it. The impression of his personality has done everything; the matter therefore, as far as I am concerned, has been entirely passive on my part, although it seems to me that the personality of Jesus, which naturally conveys the idea of limitation, also possesses something universal, by which it is capable of forming a connection with the hearts of others, as it has done with mine.

But why has this connection between me and him been only so recently formed? He knows; but not I. “The Father,” as he himself says, “must draw those

who come to the Son." But has he not previously drawn me? This may have been the case, and I may have resisted it. But now he drew me so strongly, that I could not help following the attraction. The horrible inward apprehension, the dreadful conflicts, the distraction of my mind, which increased almost to insanity, may all have belonged to this drawing. If this be the case, I will ever regard them as blessings. My heart was a hard-trodden highway, on which wordly lust, pride, and sensuality drove along; it has now been torn up by a plough-share, which has penetrated dreadfully deep; it is now able to receive the Divine seed.

I wished to learn from Christ himself what I ought to think of him. In the course of reading, I noted down everything that he had said of himself. Love is fond of writing—it cannot avoid writing to or of its object. Thus a long catalogue of passages respecting the person of Jesus was formed; I could, indeed, have met with them in any of the works on the subject, and perhaps much better arranged; but, probably, not always collected by the hand of love; hence, such books are of no value to me at present. I cannot deny the fact, that, although as it respected the idea of his person, I was resolved to observe the precise bounds of that which he himself might desire; yet I could not refrain from wishing that he might

demand much, nay the utmost possible, with reference to the belief in his Divinity. This wish was fulfilled in its full extent. When such passages occurred as the following :—" I and the Father are one ;" " I will raise him up at the last day, that all men may honour the Son even as they honour the Father"—I could have always leaped for joy ; whilst at the same time I was deeply penetrated by a feeling of awe. Words like these, from the lips of Jesus, were like a clap of thunder in a serene sky ; they bring before us the presence of the Deity ; we look up, and behold, not its wrathful but its benignant countenance. The whole world may now despise, scorn, and ridicule me ; yea, I will rather suffer myself to be racked and tortured to death, than deny what Jesus says, and before I will begin to treat and bargain with him respecting the power of his words, as if he had not meant them in so strong a sense, nor wished to require so much. He says he is God. He is so ; and upon this I will live and die.



## LETTER XV.

I WRITE again, without waiting for a letter from you. I put objections into your mouth, and answer them according to what I have hitherto experienced.

For what purpose should God become man, and descend upon the earth, in order to converse with me? Answer: In order that God may become to me a living God, and that I may begin to experience something at this appellation. I must confess I have hitherto lived without God. The mere taking for granted the existence of an author of all things, without knowing in what situation we stand to him; without his holding converse with us, or we with him—is in reality having no God. But is it necessary that God should descend from heaven, in order to enter into a closer relation with mankind? Answer: In what other way can it take place? Must men be elevated into heaven? It is to be lamented that people will rather assent to impossibilities, than admit of a miracle. It is much easier to suppose God descending from heaven, than man ascending to heaven.

You may perhaps remember, my dearest friend,



that during the first day I spent in your house, I manifested a cool, timid, and reserved deportment towards you. On the morning of the second day, when we were alone, you surprised and delighted me, by declaring that you felt yourself drawn to me, and wished to give me proofs of your friendship and affection. Without this declaration, could I have ever had a presentiment of your sentiments towards me—have been able to place full confidence in you—or communicate every thing that passes within me in a series of letters to you? Therefore, in order to become acquainted with a man's sentiments towards me, he must converse with me; how then shall we be able to know the sentiments of God towards us, or place confidence in him, if he continues silent with respect to us?

But it may be said, that God sufficiently reveals himself in the universal laws and arrangements of nature. That heart is cold that speaks thus. Dost thou, therefore, desire to know nothing more than that Summer is succeeded by Autumn, and then by Winter, which will be followed by Spring? Nothing more, than that he who has sinned must suffer the deserved punishment? Yet this is almost all that thou canst learn from the physical and moral order of the world. And hast thou no particular affair to settle with the Ruler of the world, which has not

reference to his universal laws, but to his personal sentiments concerning thee ?

A man has committed a crime, and is desirous of applying to the king for pardon. He is uncertain whether his petition will find a hearing. A friend comes to him, to whom he states his anxiety and apprehensions. "Be comforted," says the former ; "do you not see that the king rules his territory by excellent laws ?" "Laws ! laws !" exclaims the other, in despair at the miserable consolation ; "according to the laws thieves are imprisoned, and murderers executed, and I am also threatened by the laws with one or other of these punishments. I did not wish to know that ; but whether there is any thing in the personal feelings of the king, from which I might cherish any hope of pardon." And has not every one of us such an affair with God, as cannot be settled by means of the universal order of nature, but only by the extraordinary method of grace ? Or do the generality of people know nothing of this inward necessity ? I condemn no one ; having long enough known nothing of it myself. But now it urges and impels me upwards to God, in order to mourn before Him, over all the misery which has accumulated in me, in consequence of my transgressions ; for the purpose of seeking from him, by means which can be known to him alone, the restoration of my peace of mind,

and the regulation of my disordered powers. If, under such circumstances, I were directed to the order of nature, it would only be like saying to a criminal, who was hoping for mercy, ‘Peace, peace, my friend! there are blocks and scaffolds enough in this country!’”

With respect to many, God is nothing else than nature and its order. They refuse to acknowledge any other revelation of God than in his universal laws; and when these are set aside, the God they have made themselves ceases to be. And is it possible that they can wear such chains, without becoming a prey to despair? I could never do so—at least should now be incapable of it. As it regards me, God begins to live, whilst breaking through the fixed order of nature. He is now a person, and has now a heart to which I can apply.

Others, to whom I have hitherto myself belonged, believe in a personal God, or at least maintain it; but are unwilling that God should reveal himself in any other way than through the medium of nature and reason. But whilst thus setting bounds to him, they transform the living God into an impersonal abstract principle, and a lifeless law, by which the world is regulated. A God who cannot abrogate the order he has established; who, when his heart prompts him to it, cannot converse with mankind in a way

never heard of before—is no living, personal God ; is not the Creator of the universe, who was before all things. I must either give myself up to a pantheism, which brings me to despair, or I must believe in a God who reveals himself in Christ ; I do the latter.

## LETTER XVI.

THE miracles related in Scripture are a dreadful stone of stumbling to many wise men, and render the whole Bible suspicious to them. That the waters of the sea divided, and towered aloft on both sides; that the dead, in consequence of new life communicated to them, left their graves—are things which must not be mentioned to them; they are much too wise to believe any thing of the kind; such things are only suitable for children and the vulgar.

Thank heaven that I have got beyond these miserable scruples! The necessity of accepting that miracle of all miracles, the incarnation of the Son of God, has reconciled me to all the other wonders. When Deity descends into humanity, omnipotence can also enter into nature, and change its laws; that supreme and greatest of all miracles requires a retinue and an attendance of other wonderful phenomena. It operates backwards and forwards. The people amongst whom the God-man is to appear, the ground on which he is to tread, must be cultivated and prepared by miracles for his reception; and after he has vanished from the

earth, he must leave behind him, in the mighty acts of his disciples, an echo of his own.

He who doubts of the reality of miracles, does not love Christ ; he would rather that a blemish should attach to Christ, than humble himself. It costs Reason something—this vain ignoramus, who is so proud of her narrow limits—to acknowledge anything as a real fact, which lies beyond the sphere of her jurisdiction. But unless she does this, where is the truth and faithfulness of Christ, who has borne testimony to his own miracles, to those of his apostles, and to all those which had been performed in former times ? Does it therefore cost you nothing, ye self seeking mortals, to attempt to annihilate the only completely glorious and perfect appearance on this miserable earth, only that you may not be accused of cherishing a simple childlike faith ? In order that you may not require to humble yourselves, is Christ—may he pardon the expression !—to be made a liar ?

## LETTER XVII.

THAT which a dry skeleton is, compared with a living body, is the idea I had formerly of God, compared with that which is now formed in me.

In the religious instruction which I received at an earlier period of my life, I was mortally tired of hearing the attributes of God repeated, one after the other—such as his omnipotence, wisdom, &c. When God is spoken of, thought I—for even then I had some obscure feeling of it—he ought to be represented in colours brilliant as the rainbow, rejoicing everything like the sun, and refreshing the heart as the dew-drops do the tender herb. But when spoken of in the manner above-mentioned, it seemed to me like breaking off single boughs from a dead tree, holding them up, and saying, “See, how it sends forth buds and blossoms !”

But how are we to transmute this dry and unrefreshing detail into an energetic and animating discourse upon the Supreme Good ? I think, by beginning with that which the holy Apostle John says ; “ God is love.” This touches the heart ; nor does the mind go away empty, for it imagines to itself more in the idea of love, than in that of infinity, spirit, eternity, or immutability. I would not, however, give up the lat-



ter attributes; but rather make them serve as an ornament to that love which is the essence of Deity.

Yes, thou supreme Love! Thou art one essentially and exclusively, so as no one upon earth, nor even the glowing heart of an angel, can experience. Thou art infinite in greatness; for I hasten after thee through the boundless universe, and every where I find beings whom thou bearest on thy bosom;—infinite in little things; for thou hast numbered even the hairs of our heads, and regulated circumstances which withdraw themselves from the observation and conception of those who experience them. Thou art eternal; for before created beings were called into existence, thou didst prepare their felicity, and wilt rejoice in it everlastingly. There is no change nor shadow of turning in thee; thou dost not love more at one time and less at another; but always infinitely, both when thou causest delight and when thou causest grief, both when thou rewardest and when thou punishest. Thou art happy; for can love be anything else than happy? I shall be so with thee, whilst loving thee in return. Thou art satisfied in thyself, even as love though unreturned, if it be only perfect, is satisfied; but yet thou wouldst that other beings also might be happy through their love to thee. The word of thy love was omnipotent; I experience this in the weak words which my lips are able to utter; they penetrate into the hearts of others, and animate

my ideas in them, only when love impels me to speak. But, O infinite Love ! couldst thou ever withdraw thyself from that which thou hast created ; or turn away thine eyes from all the changes which take place in it ; or leave it to the course of a blind chance, without having previously regulated every thing ? No ; thou dost not depart from us ; thine eye is ever directed towards us, and thou hast provided for us even to all eternity. Thy intention is, to lead us to thyself, who art wholly love : and hence there must necessarily be even here, though limited by earthly deficiencies, a kingdom of love, a kingdom of God, in which we are prepared for the perfect kingdom above. It manifested itself, from the very first, in the social relations of human life, and as a holy enthusiasm for the things in which we are born and bred. It appeared still more mighty in all that was to prepare the way for the appearing of the great and Divine Envoy. But when he came, the heavenly kingdom of God itself appeared on earth ; and it poured itself out in superabundant fulness, when from love he breathed out his life on the cross.

Thy justice, O God ! is also nothing else than love ; for thou only punishest us here below, that we may turn away from the world, which hates us, unto thee, who lovest us. Thou excludest only those from thy felicity, with a love incompatible with hatred, who

hate instead of loving. Thou art holy through thy love ; for evil is only that which is opposed to love : by it thou art our example ; for as it respects us also, there is no other virtue than love. And when we call thee a Spirit, and take away all corporal limitations, which prevent the expansion of infinite love, we still confess, that from love thou hast made thyself visible to man, and hast presented thyself to our eyes, and hast drawn near to our hearts, in the person of Jesus Christ.

## LETTER XVIII.

It is all at an end ! It is over with me ! I can bear it no longer ! A new life seemed to have arisen within me in faith, after a long and deadly conflict ; it was the last flickering of the lamp, ere it was extinguished for ever.

But you do not understand me. I will therefore force myself to relate to you what has occurred to me ; I will penetrate into the depth of my dreadful pain—the only pain I ever felt—lose myself in it, and, if possible, perish in it.

I believe I have already mentioned to you, at the commencement of my correspondence, an unfortunate or rather culpable passion, which was the real cause of my leaving my native land. I must now add to that statement, that the person for whom I felt it, was the wife of my friend. His ignorance of it had continued incomprehensibly long, when all at once the horrible truth unfolded itself to him, and he presented himself before me with the accusation of the blackest perfidy. At first I was petrified and mute ; but the boundless pain which rent his heart just where it was the most susceptible—this pain, which ought to have

overwhelmed me,—soon inspired me with a dreadful rage, in which I thought myself justified, because the fault charged upon me consisted only in feelings, looks, and words. But was it less culpable on that account? I began to return defiance for reproaches, and scorn for complaints; my madness had also infected him, who was otherwise of a kind and gentle disposition, in such a measure, and enraged him beyond all bounds, that we decided upon terminating the quarrel by fighting a duel, in which one of us should be slain. He fired first, and certainly with a trembling hand; his ball erred past me. Hatred had sharpened my sight and steadied my hand; I fired and he fell. But that moment, I sank also to the ground, my feverish heat having given way to a cold and horrible consciousness of my crimes. The witnesses of the unhappy conflict urged me to hasten home, in order to make immediate preparations for flight. There I soon received a message which induced me to remain. The wound of my antagonist was not mortal; he had come to himself out of his fainting fit, and been carried home, and there was every hope of a not very distant recovery. The latter ensued; he seemed to have reconciled himself with his wife, and both, whom I have never seen since that time, left their place of residence, and retired to a country seat, which lay deeply hidden in an Alpine valley.

Since that period, the justice of God has followed me. I lived in my native town as an outlaw and an exile; for every social bond between me and my friends and fellow towns-people was dissolved; every one fled from me, and I did not dare to appear before any one. My mother, who was at that time ill, and lived very retired, learnt something however of the mournful tale; and although she avoided conversing with me upon it, yet the silent sorrow which consumed her, did not escape me. As long as she lived, I could not, and dared not, forsake her; but I had no sooner closed her eyes, than I felt urgently impelled to leave my native land, hoping to breathe more freely in another country, where I should be entirely separated from all those whom I had offended, and where I should hear nothing of them nor they of me.

In this I was mistaken; for although I had imagined that my abode was not known in my native land, yet providence has yesterday suffered the following letter to reach me. It is from the wife of my unhappy friend:—

“My husband is dead, and I obey his last will, by informing you that he heartily forgave you, and even often spoke of you with his wonted friendship.

“I have no doubt that the wound he received in the duel, and which was only apparently healed; or rather, that a much deeper wound which he bore in



his heart since that period, was the cause of his death.

“ I will, if God permit, spend the remainder of my life in penitence and grief at the place where he died, and wait for the longed-for moment of my decease. May heaven also grant you the grace of perceiving the aberrations of your former life.”

Alas ! alas ! what painful news ! I am a murderer ! a double murderer—for grief will not suffer her to live much longer ; this, and nothing else, is my crime. If this news had reached me some months earlier, I might possibly have found some false consolation. But I am now inconsolable. Heaven, into which I had looked only for a moment, sends me an avenging angel, who points his flaming sword to my heart. Or if I had heard of it some months later, by the favour of Heaven, which began to smile upon me, I might perhaps have gained sufficient firmness to bear all things, and even this. But now, just now, when a paradise was blooming before my eyes ; when an inspiration, never felt before, was bearing me above the visible heavens to the throne of God—that is suddenly taken from me which was scarcely given me, and I fall from my timid and uncertain flight, shattered upon the earth. I know not what to do ; every better thought which had germinated in my soul, becomes a flaming scourge which chastises me.



Heaven, into which I had boldly looked, vanishes from my view ; I only see hell before me, peopled with murderers, and inhabited by hatred, which opens itself to receive a monster such as I. I have transgressed the sacred commands, not of men, but of God ; I have rebelled against his government of the world ; he must reject me—in his kingdom there can be no place for me. Oh why was I born ! why is my spirit incarcerated in the limits of this existence, which it can no longer burst, to flow back into nothingness ! What has my life, from the earliest period to which memory can revert, been else but a continual torment, which I have borne in the deepest recesses of my heart, and which I have raised to a height no longer tolerable by my unhappy passions ? O God ! O God ! who didst create even such a wretch as I to participate in thy felicity, hast thou entirely forsaken me ? Shall I perish irremediably ?

## LETTER XIX.

OH what nights I pass ! Wearied with grief and weeping, I soon sink into sleep ; but in a few minutes the faithless slumber is fled, and my eyes again open. The unhappy duel then presents itself before me ; I see myself appearing, as with hell in my heart, and elevate my hand as if pointed by hell—and see my friend fall to the ground. The scene changes, it presents a little solitary house, in a gloomy and confined valley. In a dark room he lies dying and motionless upon his couch ; she sits before him, and weeps. I perceive their conversation is of me. I am then unable to bear it any longer ; I leap up, dress myself, and wander about. Thus several months ago did I pace my chamber, torturing and tormenting myself, without in reality knowing wherefore. Now when I feel myself tormented, I know but too well the cause of my pain ; and it seems to me as if on this account my present state was preferable to the former one.

If the morning is gloomy, it seems to be more melancholy than the night ; if it is bright, I cannot comprehend what the sunshine has to do with me. When the day declines, and the evening approaches,

a wonderful and inexplicable tranquillity generally enters my heart. Is not this some heavenly influence, which at such times produces this effect upon me, for which I can assign no other cause? I am then also able to pray. I can only exclaim indeed, from the bottom of my heart, "Woe is me! Lord, help me!" But I believe that this also is prayer. I am able then also to open my Bible; and the history of our Lord's passion then invariably presents itself to me. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Thus I exclaim with Christ, and whilst uttering these words, I feel that God has not entirely forsaken me, and that I have not wholly departed from him.

## LETTER XX.

WHILST pacing my apartment last night by the light of my lamp, the words of the Apostle Paul suddenly occurred to me, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." I paid little attention to them at first, and roved with my thoughts to other subjects. But these words continually came in my way, and almost forcibly compelled me to direct my attention to them. I was unable and unwilling to resist the impression, and held the following monologue upon the import of the passage :

' Sin has abounded in me ; but it is written, and I must believe it, if I believe in God, that grace can much more abound. This grace can forgive sin ; it can do more—it can expel sin from the heart. But first of all, sin must be forgiven. Let me not be told of amendment and sanctification ; I will not hear of them, until I know that God has forgiven me.

' God is willing to forgive every one ; he will therefore forgive me : who would venture to doubt of it ? If I were the vilest criminal ' — here I paused, and was horrified at the idea which flashed through me, that

the difference between me and the vilest criminal was not so great as I had formerly imagined,—‘the vilest criminal,’ continued I, ‘can obtain grace. See him sitting in his dungeon, waiting for death at the hands of the executioner on the morrow. Now, if he casts himself into the arms of Divine Grace, as entirely lost, and, regarding himself as such, renounces every attempt to save himself, he dies in a state of salvation. This is effected by virtue of the death of Jesus, who is the true God, and yet died on the cross as man.

‘Now, if these criminals obtain forgiveness from God,’ asked I, ‘why may not I?’ but here a voice said within me, ‘yea, they may be forgiven, but it does not thence follow that thou wilt be forgiven.’

I could not comprehend my own state of mind. I said to myself, ‘why should I not appropriate to myself that in which the vilest malefactor may participate?’ but in vain; I had inwardly no consciousness of forgiveness.

‘But what does this mean?’ exclaimed I, almost in despair. ‘Notwithstanding my transgressions, the greatness of which I acknowledge, I am better than numberless others. I have never loved that which is base and vile. I have even been susceptible of the truth of the Sacred Scriptures; of belief in the Divine

dignity of the Redeemer ; and yet I am unable to lay hold of the forgiveness offered, which even a murderer can appropriate to himself.

‘A murderer?’ here I paused ; for something like light began to gleam. ‘Certainly,’ continued I, ‘even a murderer, if he regard himself as a completely and utterly worthless individual, who has not the power to rescue himself : therefore it only depends upon my humbling myself in an equal degree.’

‘Impossible ! impossible !’ exclaimed my heart, with repugnance. ‘I cannot degrade myself to the lowest stage of human nature ; I cannot declare the years I have hitherto spent as entirely lost ; I cannot despise the natural gifts which the Creator has bestowed upon me, and by which he has elevated me above a thousand others. And were I to give up everything besides, there would still remain the last few weeks of my life, in which I have begun to believe in Christ, and to love him, and even the struggles which preceded my enlightening, and which prepared my heart for it. If I were to condemn every thing in me without exception, and cast away all merit from me as a filthy rag, I should totter, like a weak and quivering flame, on the brink of the abyss of annihilation and eternal torment.’

‘It is of no avail,’ said I, after some consideration. ‘I must take the last fearful step of self-condemna-



tion and self-annihilation. The impulse I feel within me, and which urges me to this spiritual death, is too strong; I cannot resist it. Well then, I will accomplish it. Let sentence be pronounced upon me. I place myself on the deepest and lowest step on which man has ever stood. I acknowledge that there is not a single individual to whom I deserve to be preferred; for we are all sinners, and under condemnation in the sight of God; and amongst these there are no gradations of honour and distinction. Yes, I acknowledge that there is none so vile and reprobate to whom I do not yield the precedence; because, in my situation, and enjoying similar advantages, the former would perhaps have fallen less deeply than I. Vain and entirely fruitless has been my former life; it has been of no importance—at least not as it respects heaven, though perhaps with reference to hell. I dare not rejoice in the good sentiments and actions which may have been scattered through it; for these emotions, since they do not proceed from myself, but emanate in an incomprehensible manner from heaven, only make my sins, by contrast, the blacker and more heinous. I even cease to boast of the commencements of my faith and love to thee, O Lord! for I acknowledge that both can be, and have been, nothing more than a glow of the imagination, without any real participation of the heart. In this state my soul draws near to thee, my



Redeemer, naked and bare, and, like a little flame, quivering over the pit of perdition; wilt thou now receive me?

Such were my sentiments, and an unspeakably sweet and certain feeling that I was accepted and pardoned by my Redeemer, took the place of my previous agonizing doubts.

Whilst life still struggles with death in a dying man, he moves and writhes about, with a countenance distorted by agony and fear. But when life has once withdrawn from the unequal conflict, and death has fully overcome—the corpse lies stretched out, as if in a sweet slumber; and the friendly smile, which hovers upon the features, appears to announce that the supposed defeat has been a real victory. I have also died, and over me steals the serene repose of death.

## LETTER XXI.

I LOOK back, with silent gratitude to God, on the conflict of the night which I described to you in my last letter. The peace which sprang up within me, after having annihilated myself in my own eyes, has not departed from me. I cannot say that it is a peace devoid of pain; for the reproofs which conscience makes me, and which I do not reject, are stronger than ever; yet they no longer excite that dreadful alarm which formerly tormented me, but a sorrow, which I may term a godly one, and which can well consist with peace. As long as I live, I desire no other fundamental feeling within, than this strange mixture of pain and peace; and I only pray that it may not be taken from me, nor weakened.

Thus I experience at what price Jesus becomes our Redeemer. All must be given for all. Every thing we supposed we possessed must be renounced, and then we possess him. The more decidedly we renounce ourselves, the greater our part in Christ. Ah! I know not how far I have proceeded

in this self-annihilation; it is possible that in a further development of the Christian life within me, I may look down upon my present state, as a very low stage of it; but compared with my former states, the present is an advance.

In the letters which I wrote you on the first awakening of my faith, I expressed myself in many high-sounding words upon the Scriptures, the divinity of Christ, the miracles, and the necessity of a revelation. Such-like language I should now be unable to employ; I even no longer feel that animation which elevated me at that time; how can animation consist with death? For I still regard myself as dead. There is nothing in me but a very peaceful feeling of profound wretchedness and unbounded grace. The grace is so great, that I do not despair on account of the wretchedness; but the latter is so horrible, that I cannot fall into any enthusiastic rapture at the grace. I am still the hovering flame over the abyss; only with this difference, that the breath of Eternal Compassion bears me up, and preserves me from sinking. Occasionally I should not feel satisfied with my state, as being so cold and sober, did I not reflect that lofty thoughts and transports do not become a poor sinner like myself. I appear

before Christ, and have in reality no particular thoughts or feelings; only a nameless something which says to him, from the centre of my heart, 'Thou art my Redeemer!' and a silent tear stands in my eye to confirm the language of my heart. With this I believe the Lord is satisfied for the present.

## LETTER XXII.

THE angels, says the Scripture, desire to look into the mystery of redemption, and I have also this desire. Who indeed can fathom it? Neither man nor angel is able to do it. When the fatal flash singles out the husband and father, in the circle of his young family, and at the side of his loving consort, and hurls him lifeless to the ground, I do not pretend to be able to comprehend the connection in which this event stands with the final aim of mankind, and with their other destinies, and the necessity which is thereby implied; yet in faith I attach such a necessity to it. How should I therefore be able to comprehend the necessary connection of the death of Jesus on the cross, with the redemption of the human race? This would pre-suppose a perfect insight into all the depths of deity, and into the nature of salvation and condemnation. I believe, therefore, before I investigate. Investigation ought not to produce faith; I have already attained to the latter, on the path of inward experience, in which I have been led by the Spirit of God. Its only object is to bring my thoughts upon this subject into unison with each

other respecting the instructions contained in the Scriptures, and the ever craving necessities of my heart.

I wish to be saved, and deserve to be lost. This is the true state of the case. What can man do to alter it? Nothing, abstractedly considered. The generality of people, in the pride of conscious security, do not observe the danger, nor attempt to escape from it. But when they make the attempt, the latter is unavailing. The fulfilment of duty, to which I am impelled solely and wholly by the desire of escaping Divine punishment, and therefore by servile fear, cannot possibly satisfy the Almighty, or procure me his favour, which I have forfeited by sin. However, let it be supposed, that the motive is entirely pure and acceptable to God—and further, that the individual has committed only a single sin in his whole life, and that all its other moments have been employed in the practice of virtue; though in moments so employed, he has drawn down upon himself no chastisement, yet he has not on that account compensated for that single sin; the punishment he has thereby deserved, has not been on that account remitted him.

Hence so much is certain; the forgiveness of sins is not the result of any human merit, but solely of the grace of God. But why did this grace require

the death of Jesus? Was this means necessary, in order to excite Divine compassion? Would it not have been more seemly for him to have avoided the appearance of being placated only by tortures and martyrdom, and to have offered the forgiveness of sins to mankind, without any thing further, on the condition of faith and amendment?

I am obliged to doubt that such a mode of procedure would have become the Most High. A forgiveness which he vouchsafed, at the expense of everything that reminded the individual of his severity, justice, and his wrath against sin, might easily have been construed, by our corrupt hearts, into a weak-minded negligence and an approval of sin; and it would have been unworthy of the holy God, to have given occasion to any such ideas. How wonderfully, on the contrary, are severity and mercy united in the atonement of Christ! When I look at the crucified Saviour, I behold, at one view, punishment and forgiveness; I feel, at the same time, horror and rapture; and I hate the sin that was the procuring cause of such torments, equally as much as I love that God who inflicts them not on me.

I go a step further, and I do not dread taking into account all the difficulties which present themselves in this view of the subject. The question is asked, "how does it accord with the justice of God, that he



not merely permits the sufferings of the guiltless for the guilty—but also for the sake of these sufferings pardons the guilty? ’ Numberless questions of this kind may be raised, as soon as the point of view is changed, from which the work of redemption ought to be contemplated, and as soon as that is endeavoured to be comprehended by the understanding, which can only be felt by a heart that longs for redemption. I do not start such a question. I remember what a dreadful conflict it cost me, before the certainty of forgiveness could penetrate into and pacify my mind. For such is man—at one time presumptuous; at another despairing. Terrors cannot be sufficiently accumulated to cure his presumption, nor tokens of favour to raise him from his despondency. The presumptuous are terrified at the sight of the crucified Jesus, and the merited punishment; the desponding begin to hope that the latter may be remitted them. Yes, I confess that in the season of conflict there was so strong a feeling within me, of the heinousness of my sin and the necessity of punishment, that I could only be delivered from the fear of suffering it myself, by the certainty that the punishment I deserved had been already endured for me by another. If God had sent an angel to me with the assurance that I should be liberated without any ransom, I should not have believed this angel, and should have

plunged myself, in despair, into the torments I had merited. In this desire of the heart, which is conscious of its guilt, for punishment—in this impossibility of being set at rest, except by the remission of it,—I perceive a fundamental impulse of human nature; and I am compelled to believe, that this desire of man accords with the demands of Divine justice.

Still I have not attained my object. I desire to be saved, and am only *not* damned. The latter does not constitute the former. Even as it was inconsistent with the justice of God to spare me after the commission of so much sin—so it is likewise in contradiction to it, to make me a partaker, without any merit of my own, of that which no eye hath seen, nor ear heard, and which has never entered into the heart of man. I myself, who just before, in the consciousness of my guilt, desired the punishment I merited, shrink back from the superabundant felicity which is offered me, and dare not venture to lay hold of it. Christ alone possesses a merit commensurate to that felicity. To Him, who from pure and disinterested love to God and man breathed out his life on the cross—to Him belongs the greatest fulness of recompense which God is able to bestow. It belongs certainly to him; but how can I obtain it? The punishment I have merited must first be

remitted me, because he endured it; and I am now to become a partaker of felicity and glory, because he has merited them for me. All these are things which reason cannot comprehend. I am inclined to believe that the human understanding does not determine the relative situations of things in the spiritual world, but that these are regulated by other laws. The understanding is not conscious that there is an eternally indissoluble bond between that Jesus, who has preserved us from the pit of eternal woe, and the soul which has been saved by him, and which hangs upon him with unspeakable love. But there is still something else in man, by which he is capable of being conscious of this. Thank God, I possess this consciousness; I feel it through my whole being, which trembles at the fulness of grace and love in Jesus, at the terrors of the pit and the glories of heaven. I not merely feel—I know and perceive with the full certainty which is given to reason, that my Saviour, if I do not forsake him, cannot forsake me to all eternity; that he was elevated on the wood of the cross for me; that he entered heaven for my sake; that he here endured what I deserved; and that I shall there enjoy what he has merited. Where He is, there I must be. What he possesses, I must also enjoy. This is the con-

sequence of his love, the infinity of which is felt and anticipated with increasing force by my incipient love to him.

Thus the mystery of redemption appears, to my primary reflection, radiant with holiness and love. But now enough of reflection! Let my spirit lose itself in blissful contemplation and rapturous astonishment!

## LETTER XXIII.

OH what a wonderful similarity in the history of two friends ! You have therefore also arrived, at the same time as I did, at the knowledge of Christ, and the conviction that we require a Redeemer ! But how different are the paths which have led us to the same end ! If it can be said of any one, it may be said of you, that your heart and life have continued pure ; but that because of this very purity you become the more susceptible of the impression which the corruption of human nature must produce on the one hand, and the perfection of our Redeemer on the other. You do not express this ; your humility does not even permit you to think of it ; but believe me, it is really so. You are on the direct road ; I have come to the Redeemer after long aberrations. He has only reached you the hand to assist you in ascending ; he has drawn me out of the abyss in which I was plunged. You are like John ; I am like Paul. But it is still one and the same grace, which has done all, and has hindered your virtue from being injurious to you through pride, and my corruption from being injurious to me through despair. This

grace is inexhaustibly rich in means, and amongst the numberless individuals whom it has saved, there are perhaps not two, who have been led entirely by the same path. However I am compelled to believe that the path of Paul occurs more frequently than that of John.

Although I feel in my heart, since I have attained to the consciousness of my forgiveness, a profound and continual sorrow (and when ought such a feeling to be absent from us?), yet this sorrow is not unto death, but unto life; and although darkness covers the depth of my heart, yet the latter is sufficiently expanded to rejoice in the grace of God and the excellencies of pious men, and to receive every ray of light which occasionally falls into it.

The company of Steindorf and his lady affords me indescribable consolation. He is a man of business, and a Christian. It is remarkable how much the Christian ennobles in him the man of business, and at the same time elevates him above the narrow limits of practical life. In his civil vocation, he labours for the kingdom and glory of his Lord; hence nothing can equal his zeal and fidelity in the discharge of his duties; but at the same time, he stands above his outward situation, and judges of the events which happen in the world, and the occurrences of life, in the reflection of a superior light.



His consort is no ordinary character ; piety manifests itself in her, not in the common way, but in a manner which is extremely original. She is between forty and fifty ; not without the remains of former distinguished beauty ; the diminution of which, in consequence of increasing years, is, however, not regretted, because there is still a sufficiency of other attractions to admire. It is perceptible, that she has not only moved in polished circles, but also that she has done much for her own mental improvement. She possesses nearly all those accomplishments and talents which well become her sex. But the most prominent and admirable feature in her character is her affectionate disposition. I have never before seen, either amongst men or women, any that live so little for themselves, and so entirely for others. She is not, however, like many other pious persons with whom I have become acquainted here, who seem every moment to say to themselves, ‘ I will be affectionate ; ’ and hence have something constrained in their manifestation of kindness, or at least a consciousness of shewing it. It never seems to occur to her, whilst thinking of others from morning till evening, and labouring for them, that she is doing anything particular. I might also say, that this principle of universal love, which can only be a gift of grace, seems in her to have become a natural quality. I have never met



with such an instance of that which in religious works is sometimes called simplicity, and of that unremitting advancement in the good way, without reflecting upon the progress made. Hence strange things often occur with the people who become acquainted with her. They think at first, on witnessing so much kindness, and such deep interest in the affairs of others, which elicits no trace of superior acquirements—"She is a well-meaning woman, but probably does not possess much understanding." But soon the conversation takes another turn, and they are not a little astonished that this good-humoured woman passes her opinion on the productions of literature and of art, and the various phenomena in the sphere of morals and religion, with all the discrimination of a man, and with that refinement which is peculiar only to females of polished education. She immediately formed an advantageous opinion of me, in consequence of a heartfelt expression I uttered respecting my dear departed mother; and assured her husband, as the latter afterwards told me, that 'I should certainly become a good Christian; for the grace of God never forsook those who loved their mothers.' They have two lovely children, the one a boy of ten years of age, and the other a girl of five. There is much happiness in their habitation. May the Lord long preserve it to them!

## LETTER XXIV.

OH how has my heart again been rent ; but how has it also been elevated towards heaven ! I must tell you all.

On Friday, Madam von Steindorf was indisposed—I sent frequently to make inquiry respecting her, and was always informed that the evil was not dangerous. Last Tuesday, I went thither myself, in order at least to see her husband. Every door, which was usually shut, stood open ; I went, without meeting any one, towards a room, in which I heard voices. Steindorf stood at the door. Without looking around me, I said, “My dear friend, how is your lady ?” On which he threw himself into my arms, weeping violently, and trembling through his whole frame, exclaiming, “She is dead ! she has just expired !”

Oh what a wonderful contrast between the repose of a corpse, and the painful and distressing agitation around it ! With what a friendly expression of countenance did she lie there ! Her head had sunk a little backwards, but was otherwise in the most natural and pleasing position. The eyes were already closed. She seemed to be asleep, and to smile in her slumbers

on those whom she loved ; but yet there was always something sacred, something mysterious in this sleep, which ordinary sleep does not possess. The husband and the nearest relatives stood, walked, were silent a moment, and then broke out into loud lamentations expressive of their grief ; they approached the corpse, kissed its mouth and its hands. She lay motionless, and with a smile on her face, but returned none of these caresses. The window-curtains, which had been carefully drawn during her illness, had been already drawn back ; and the sun shone unsympathizingly into the apartment.

The children were not present. The daughter had been sent, a few days before, to a female friend of the mother's : one of those present had conducted the son, during his mother's last moments, into a remote apartment ; he had there directed him to the history of the daughter of Jairus in the New Testament, which he urged him to read, and to pray for his mother. The boy, who knew nothing of his mother's death, now entered. He saw her lying, and heard the people exclaiming as he approached, " God has taken your mother to himself." For a moment he was mute ; he then cried out, whilst tears burst from his eyes, " Nothing can help us now but prayer !" threw himself on his knees in the middle of the room, and said, " Lord, thou didst raise up the daughter of

Jairus, raise up my mother also !” Was this the fruit of the pious education she had given him—the fruit of her fervent prayers ? or did an angel speak by the mouth of the boy ? However that may be, the departed saint surely heard these words on her way to heaven, and rejoiced over them. His father folded him in his arms, and said, “ Your prayer is heard ; the Lord has raised her up, not to an earthly but to a heavenly life.”

The movements of the living still continued around the silent and peaceful dead. Friends, acquaintances, and relatives hastened thither, immediately on hearing the rapidly spreading and mournful intelligence. Every one was affected ; every one wished to hear the particulars of her last moments ; every one began with tears to speak in praise of so much piety, affection, and kindness, of which the world had been deprived. At length the scene became more tranquil ; the greater part had withdrawn ; the nearest relatives alone remained. Steindorf went into an adjoining apartment, whither we followed him, and placed himself so that he could see the corpse through the open door. He took up the Bible, and read from the gospel of John our Lord’s last discourses, before he went home to his Father, with a trembling voice, which was often interrupted by tears ; and during which it was evident to us, from the emphasis laid on par-

ticular passages, he thought not merely of the Lord, but also of the beloved of his heart, who was now with the Lord. O my friend, the Bible is the word of God! He only who created the heart of man, is able, at such seasons, to give it what it requires; he alone can speak words like these:—

“ Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. . . I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. . . . I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. . . . I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live ye shall live also. . . . .

“ Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass; that when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much

with you : for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. . . . .

“ These things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go my way to him that sent me ; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou ? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth ; It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. . . . .

“ A little while, and ye shall not see me : and again, a little while, and ye shall see ; because I go to my Father. . . . .

“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice : and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow because her hour is come ; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow : but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

“ Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone ; and yet I am not alone ; because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto



you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world. . . .

“ And now I am no more in the world ; but these are in the world, and I come to thee.

“ Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me ; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”

After he had finished, I took my leave, in order to go away. “ The Lord,” said I to him, “ will not leave you in this heavy trial.” He answered, “ The distress of my heart is dreadful ; but I hope that this terrible visitation from God will serve for my purification ; I require no other consolation than this.”

I proceeded, after closing the door behind me, into the room where the corpse lay, so that for a moment I was alone with it. I knelt down before it, kissed its cold hand, and said, more in the heart than with the lips, ‘ Kind and maternal soul, receive my thanks for the kindness thou hast shewn to me, a stranger and unknown ! Peace be now with thy ashes ; and may thy bright example long serve to stimulate many to follow thy steps, and like thee, diffuse happiness around ! Let my end be like thine ; and where thou art, may I at length be also ! ’



## LETTER XXV.

*Saturday.*

SHE was interred this morning; I have just returned from the funeral. I repaired at day-break to the house of my unfortunate friend; the remains of his beloved consort had been already laid in their last narrow tenement, and nothing more was seen of her in the room where she had lived and died. Steindorf, on whose eyelids sleep had never descended since her dissolution—and what nights must those have been which he now spent!—went about trembling through all his frame. Two or three of the nearest relatives were already assembled beside myself. He took the Bible, and laid it open before one of them, who read as follows:

“Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice; let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord; my soul doth wait, and on his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the Lord; for

with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plentiful redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

In this gloomy apartment, on this dark and rainy morning, amongst these deeply afflicted people, and near a corpse which was soon to be carried out, I understood in some measure what was meant by the words, "Calling upon the Lord out of the depths;" and poor Steindorf probably understood it still better.

Many carriages drove up, and the apartments filled. These very individuals had probably met together many an evening in the same rooms; there they had laughed and joked, and there social mirth had reigned. They now appeared softly and silently, like apparitions; and every one remained immovable in his place. No sound was heard, not even of consolation. No one whispered to his neighbour. All stood and reflected upon the happiness of which that house had been the scene, and upon the desolation that now reigned. Thus did the friends of Job sit with him seven nights and seven days upon the ground, and were silent; for they saw that his grief was very great. Steindorf alone went occasionally to one and another, thanking them for their sympathy, and mentioning some kind word which his wife had said of them.

This lasted a while; a hint was then given him,

which he understood, took his son by the hand, and placed himself with him in the mourning coach, which immediately followed the hearse : the rest joined in the procession. The funeral passed through the streets of the town, which already began to be animated. Thus death intersects life, and life plays about death, as if it would never fall a victim to it. How many of those limbs, which now move so actively, will soon be stiff and motionless in the grave !

The grave was prepared in the churchyard, between the wall and a lofty old linden tree. The coffin was lowered into it, and a clergyman began to give an address. His words fell like a cooling balm upon a burning wound. He drew an extremely correct picture of the deceased and her eminent qualities ; and was able so to tranquillize and elevate the minds of his hearers, that each of them agreed with him when he said, at the conclusion, “ If our tears and prayers could have the effect of drawing her down from the heavenly into the earthly life, we would check our tears, and restrain the heartfelt and ardent prayer.” He concluded with the words, “ Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.” On this he took a handful of earth, and threw it upon the coffin, exclaiming, “ Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return ! Jesus Christ,

thy Redeemer, shall raise thee up at the last day.” All present—even my poor friend Steindorf and his son—threw each a handful of earth into the grave. O God ! this is therefore the last honour which one man shews another here below, to throw a handful of earth upon his coffin. And even nothing more is left for the husband to do for his consort, after so many proofs of fervent affection. Flowers were cast into the grave along with the earth, from piled up baskets, by the servants of the deceased. The gravedigger now commenced his task, and in a few minutes all was covered up by the massive clods which were forcibly shovelled in. But a magnanimous peace had entered into our hearts ; as if, whilst every thing of an earthly nature was closed up, heavenly things were unfolded to us.

## LETTER XXVI.

SINCE the decease of the consort of my unfortunate Steindorf—and above a fortnight has already elapsed—no day has passed in which I have not seen him. He assures me every time, that my company is beneficial to him, and I feel that his is salutary to me. Sorrow, profound sorrow, is my predominant feeling as well as his. Those who laugh, find no response in me ; but the contrary is the case with those who weep. I generally find him alone, in his wife's apartment, which he now occupies himself, and where, with a sacred repugnance, he avoids making any change, and preserves every object in the place which she had appointed for it. Sometimes a little circle, consisting of the nearest relatives, also assembles. The dear departed is always the subject of conversation. One evening, a part of Klopstock's *Messias* was read. I was still perfectly unacquainted with this extraordinary piece of composition ; I listened with fixed attention and with rapture. When it was ended, Steindorf said, "That is beautiful and excellent ! But now read to me another chapter from the Bible. Other writers give us at one time too much, at another too little ;

but the word of God gives us always what we need, and in the measure in which we require it."

Yesterday I again found him alone in his wife's apartment. "In what state is your heart?" inquired I. "Sometimes much distressed," replied he. "But then again I experience a sweet and profound peace. We cannot produce these frames ourselves; we must receive them as they are given us from above. Many things may occur there, which have an influence upon us, and of which we know nothing;" and after a pause he added, "I now feel indescribably comfortable."

"I admire in you," rejoined I, "the extraordinary power of Christian faith. What a loss you have sustained, and yet how calmly you bear it!"

"Do not suppose," replied he, "that it is faith which affords me that which is generally termed consolation—I mean alleviation of pain. I can imagine, that an unbeliever might suffer less painfully, and for a shorter time, than I. Such a one is like a tree, which the lightning strikes only on the sides; stripping it of its bark, which soon grows again. But a heart that has already turned itself to the invisible world, presents too much of what is inflammable to the lightning's flash, and it burns down to the very ground. My whole being is in a state of excitement. Every circumstance of my past and present life has been brought into judgment before the tribunal of God! and



you may imagine how a mortal stands there. God has shown me what I am, and what I deserve. I have not only lost my wife, I had even lost my own life and existence. But, thank God! I have found them all again in the hands of my Redeemer."

"You have the greatest certainty," continued I, "which a Christian can have, that your dear partner is not separated from you for ever."

"Not merely this," interrupted he, energetically; "I know still more; I know that she surrounds me; that she is near me; and that if I choose, even the solitary and desolate life I now lead may be spent in her society, even as it was previously spent. Does she not know, even as she is known; and is she not able, in the Omniscient, to recognize me and her poor children? Or does the invisible world only begin where the remotest stars vanish from the sphere of the telescope? Rather, is not the invisible world the centre, support, and basis of this visible world, without which the latter must sink into ruin? It is blindness and nothing else, which prevents us from always seeing heaven open, and the heavenly hosts ascending and descending. She has been near to my heart, and will always continue present with it. I shall speak to her as formerly, and shall hear her answers; by which means my deepest convictions, which always harmonized with hers, will become the more evident to me.



A lucid understanding, and animated feelings, will speak to me as formerly, in singular conjunction from her lips and her looks. I will ask her advice, when at a loss how to act—and how often will not that be the case now? But it will not be her advice alone; the Lord, by whom she was so highly favoured, will suggest to me, at the proper time, that which she herself would have done. Death, which merely separates the living soul from its clayey tenement, does not quench the tender solicitude which is felt, whilst in the body, for our children and those to whom we are the most strongly attached. Love is immortal in its nature; and unites those in spirit whom death divides; and what is more natural than the supposition, that such a departed friend and partner of our being is still about us, and that their felicity is enhanced by being permitted to minister unto us? What delight, therefore, will my beatified consort feel, in acting as the guardian angel of myself and my children, in defending us from unforeseen dangers, and in wafting refreshing breathings of consolation to us in the midst of our sorrows! and especially when the hour of death approaches, who are more likely to sympathize in the struggles of dissolving nature, and to receive our departing spirits, than those who have endured the same conflict, and whose sufferings our sympathy and affection have striven as much as possible to alleviate?"

“Oh that all had such clear and distinct views of the life to come,” exclaimed I, “as those which present themselves before your eyes!”

“How is that possible,” rejoined he, “unless all would consent to be instructed by Christ, and by him alone? Instead of this, they resort to the investigation of human nature, with which they are in reality unacquainted; or inquire of the omnipotence and wisdom of God, of which they know little; and from hence proceeds a dry, rational, obscure belief in the immortality and duration of the soul’s existence, which cannot pour one drop of balm into the wounded heart. Or if they apply to Christ, they attend solely to the fact of his resurrection; but the great difference between the latter and ours, can only fill the mind with timid astonishment. The re-animation of body and soul, which took place with him at once, is in our case divided by thousands of years; since, though the soul is immediately clothed with a heavenly body, the earthly body is only torn from the power of death at the day of the great resurrection. We must abide by the death of Christ; everything will then become plain, and clear, and obvious to our view. Why should he have redeemed me, if I were not to live for ever? What else than the awful fate which awaited me in eternity could have induced him rather to lay down his own life, than see me perish eternally?”

But what has he redeemed? Merely some abstract part of me? No; but my whole being, which is limited at present on every hand, and every thing which is not material and subject to decay. My human nature, as it now is, delivered only from the pollution and punishment of sin, shall live eternally with him. He, the Creator, who showed himself in this world as a person and an individual, will not have cloudy forms, but persons and individuals about him; he will there converse with them, and love them, even as he did his followers here. From his death, the representation of a great, glorious, peculiarly active, moveable and heavenly existence presents itself to me. In that assembly I behold also my dear and beloved consort, in her radiant robe and resplendent crown; and believe in her intercourse with the Lord with the greater certainty, since he was the third in our bond of union."

"Such a light," said he, after a pause, during which his attention had been drawn to the moonbeams, which brightly shone into the apartment—"such a light is the proper kind of illumination for the graves of the dead. Will you accompany me?"

We went along the same road which the funeral procession had taken on the day of interment. The bustle of the town, which had so animatedly surrounded us on that occasion, now began to die away.

On the squares and open spaces stood the solitary palaces and churches, as majestically as if they were not the works of man, but of nature. We were met by a few groups of persons, who seemed to have been spending the evening in the cheerful family circle. Through narrow streets, into which no moon-light fell, we approached the suburb in which the burying-ground is situate. My friend opened the door and said, "I go in and out here unhindered." The first thing that struck my eyes on entering, was the tombstone, on which the moon-light shone, which my friend had caused to be erected on the grave of his wife ; he pointed it out to me, and said, "This is the light-house to which I steer !" We approached it, after passing over footpaths, graves, and the grassy turf which was wet with dew, and placed ourselves on the bench near the grave. When we left it on the morning of interment, only a miserable sand-hill—a rising wave amongst so many others, on the ocean of mortality—pointed out the place where so much happiness lay buried. The wave had now consolidated itself, and become an island. The sand-hill was covered with green turf on the sides, and planted on the top with flowers ; it was enclosed by an iron railing, which left the necessary space for another grave beside it. At the head, an upright stone was erected. Trees, bushes, flowers, as if they had sprung

up by magic, vegetated there, perfuming the air, and seemingly occupying the place in the absence of the mourners, and interpreting their feelings.

“What fables are invented,” I began, “concerning the terrors of a church-yard in the night time ! We are here in the church-yard at this late hour, and yet neither of us is afraid.”

“Of what should we be afraid,” rejoined he, “and why should not we visit this great dormitory of mankind as well by night as by day ? Could I anticipate that she would visit me here, I would certainly very rarely leave this hillock. But I must confess, that here at her tomb I am more conscious of her absence than her presence.”

“If that be the case,” rejoined I, “why do you visit it ?”

“You do not entirely understand what I mean,” continued he. “When I stood by her corpse—especially when the features of death were visible in her countenance—it was so clearly said to me, ‘This is not she ; it is only her garment, which she has laid aside ; and at this thought my spirit elevated itself after hers to its heavenly habitation. Here, at this tomb, I feel something similar ; the spirit, which once animated this dust, more clearly separates itself from it in my idea, and this grassy hillock is for me a sublime and commanding point of view, from

whence my eye can penetrate deep into eternity. I feel strangely," added he after a pause, during which he seemed to sink into past recollections, "when I reflect that the very thing which I have attempted to express to you, was pointed out to me, in happier times, in an emblematical manner."

"In which way?" asked I.

"Of late years," replied he, "I was frequently under the necessity of visiting a bathing place with my wife. On the second or third evening after our arrival there the first time, we heard a funeral dirge from a neighbouring hill. The wife of one of the directors of the bathing institution was dead, and her remains had there been solemnly committed to the earth. A few days after, we visited the place. We had a considerable hill to ascend, by a path planted with lime trees. Towards the summit, we reached a wood, which stretched away far to the right. We found the grave of the lady under the first oaks and beech-trees; she had there sought health, but had found death, or rather real restoration. We had beneath us, to the left, one of the most pleasing landscapes I have ever beheld; and this place was frequently visited by those who resorted to the baths, as well as by ourselves, in order to enjoy the view. We sat upon a bench, and had close behind us the dark shades of the wood, in which was



the new made grave. Before us, we had a blooming and fruitful vale, interspersed with cottages and red-roofed houses, and intersected by two high roads planted with trees. Two chains of hills, which run parallel to each other, inclosed us at the two sides; and in the place where they touched each other, a prospect was afforded into another valley, and of still more distant hills, whose blue forms dawned in the horizon. There we often sat, long and silently, with solemn and melancholy feelings. From the obscurity of the wood and the vicinity of the grave, our looks extended further and further into the lighter space, which opened out to us, and sought to penetrate through the hilly defile from the nearest valley into the one beyond. I knew not, at that time, the signification of all this. Oh how strangely are the same things repeated! As then, I now sit also near a grave, in dark and profound obscurity; but beyond the grave, a prospect unfolds itself to me, into an innumerable series of light and blissful valleys; and there, as here, a grave is the best point of view for enjoying this prospect."

"This beloved grave," said I, "is therefore in reality holy ground to you, and a gate of heaven." "But," continued I, "what did you intend by saying lately, that what took place with Christ at his



resurrection, as it respects us, is divided by thousands of years ? ”

“ In the resurrection of Jesus,” answered he, “ we see body and soul immediately restored, united, and glorified. Thus it became Him, who, as regards his human nature, as well as his body and his soul, was without sin and blameless. Death had no power over him ; it could retain no part of him. But such is not the case with us ! Whilst our souls are rescued from perdition, we are compelled to leave the body, which is a part of our being, behind, as a prey to death. On this he exercises his power ; and ceases not until he has crushed the whole fabric, and dissolved it into dust. Let him do so ! The mercy of God renders the work of destruction a means of purification. Even as the soul is washed in the blood of Jesus Christ—so the body, during the lapse of hundreds and thousands of years, is purged in the mysterious chambers of corruption from its dross. It is the whole mass of believers which forms the body of Christ ; hence all, with few exceptions, will be resuscitated, restored, and raised, at the same time, since they that have preceded us, will not be made perfect without us. The soul, which had laid aside a body full of pain and disease, as a wearisome burden, finds it again, divested of every ignoble ingredient, and changed as into pure gold, which she

therefore puts on as a brilliant ornament. Thus at the last day the church, which is his body, will stand before the glorified Redeemer, likewise glorified in body and soul, and none of them shall be wanting.

“Therefore the earth,” added I, “does not preserve its treasures in the rich veins of mines, but in its graves; and shortly before its destruction will be astonished at the glories which shall be revealed by the opening graves.”

“For mine,” continued he, “I have selected a place near my beloved consort. Along this road will my corpse be carried; and this iron railing, which now incloses the spot, will open to receive it. My remains will then sleep with hers during the long night; whilst my spirit, united with hers, will look down upon this place, and await the great day of the Lord’s last revelation. For me and for her the same flowers will bloom, the same weeping willows extend their branches to the earth; until, in the course of years, even those who knew us are dead, and no one will know any more, who lies buried here. But the providence of God will watch over these graves, even when men trouble themselves no more about them. Meanwhile, I have besought the Lord that a stay at this spot may be blessed to me, and to all who visit it, by the inspiration of pious thoughts. I myself have always experienced this blessing. As often as

I have carried hither the deep sorrow which lies so heavily upon me, it has been wonderfully alleviated, under prayers and tears."

Here he was silent, and seemed to be praying to himself. The shadow of the boughs of the linden tree, moved by the breath of night, played in the moon-light on the tombstone. The air was perfumed with flowers, which adorned this and other graves. The midnight hour sounded from a neighbouring turret. The gates of the invisible world unfolded themselves to me also. I saw, in spirit, the Lord upon his throne. In the circle of the blest which surrounded him, I distinguished my father and mother. My unhappy friend, on whom I—much more unhappy than he—had inflicted a doubly mortal wound, stood at their side. They looked down upon me compassionately, but in a friendly manner, and seemed to point out to me the place ; which was prepared for me also, and to which I might attain on the prescribed path. I sank into a longing after the felicity offered to me, and entreated Him with whom nothing is impossible, to enable me to lead a pious life, and to grant me a happy death. 'Where shall I live?' thought I. 'Where shall I die? Where will my earthly remains repose after death? Be it all as thou pleasest, O Lord! Only let me die in thy favour!'

Steindorf had risen up ; I followed ; we returned slowly and silently from the churchyard, through the empty streets of the city ; which resembled a huge churchyard, since its inhabitants were reposing in the arms of sleep, which is a brother of death.

“ I intend receiving the sacrament next Sunday,” said Steindorf on taking leave ; “ have you any desire to accompany me ? ”

## LETTER XXVII.

STEINDORF'S last words have left a kind of sting behind them in my heart. To his question, whether I would receive the sacrament the following Sunday (it was then Tuesday), I could only answer in an embarrassed manner, that I did not know. I could not sleep that night; for the question, whether I ought to receive the sacrament or not, continually recurred to me. The figure of the tombstone, irradiated by the moon-light, sometimes presented itself in a tranquillizing and sleep-inviting manner to my half-closed eyes; but I was again awoke by the unanswered question. Morning has arrived, but I am still irresolute. Oh that whilst I write my thoughts might regulate themselves, and form a decision within me!

How happy do I esteem those who, following definite principles and an often recurring necessity, approach frequently, during the year, to the table of the Lord; who, whilst becoming partakers of the blessing of that sacred ordinance, overcome the natural timidity which is felt in the presence of the Most High; and who can say, with confidence and the hope of Divine

and spiritual refreshment, "I will go to receive the sacrament to morrow." I, on the contrary, unhappy mortal as I am ! who after having once communicated have suffered so many years to pass over without repeating the observance of the sacred rite ; who, with reference to it, neither possessed any principle, nor felt any necessity ; who, during my former course of life, could not have received the sacrament without committing a most dreadful sin—I must now, when beginning, or at least inclined, to amend my life, feel myself deterred by stupid fear and apprehension from that for which others long as a cordial and a refreshing ordinance !

If all those who doubt of or ridicule the truths of faith ; all those who refrain from attending church, Divine service, and the sacrament, to which latter class I myself belong—if all were to utter the feelings of their hearts, as freely as I now do towards you, they would be obliged to confess, that this ordinance which they labour to degrade into one of the most common usages of the church, is surrounded, as it respects themselves, by a majesty which excites veneration and even awe !

Were I to take an oath, the civil society which spoke to me by its deputy, and the presence of God which would speak to me by his threatenings, would

fill my mind with terror and dismay, even while I was uttering the truth.

And yet I should have spoken the truth, and have fulfilled my duty in this particular instance; and with reference to it have had nothing to fear, either as it respects civil punishment or the Divine retribution. But have I even fulfilled every thing, or can I fulfil all that is required of me with reference to the sacrament? and all that is included in the awful words of the Apostle Paul, that we are not to eat of that bread and drink of that cup unworthily. Unworthily! Oh, who is worthy in such a case! And if ye be so, ye who have shone and still shine as stars in the Christian religion; or even ye, who have moved in the limits of a contracted, dull, but devout life—am I so, who have done nothing to the glory of God, and have a thousand times broken the boundaries of his laws?

“He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself.” Judgment! Therefore I am not invited, but repelled. I hear no voice, which promises me blessings, peace, and joy; I only hear the threatening of judgment. Whilst seeking for comfort and consolation, I might expose myself to punishment. I will therefore rather give up the hope of the former, in order that I may avoid the latter.

What a majestic community is the Church! It



imparts a feeling of awe to my mind. The saints, and those that are pure in heart, stand in lesser and increasingly larger circles around the Lord, and they will not suffer one that is impure and annihilated to approach near him. If I receive the sacrament, would not that be an attempt to place myself in their circles—a declaration that I esteem myself worthy of the same privileges which they enjoy? Be such presumption far from me! Has not the Church also, in times when it felt its dignity more than at present, known how to secure its holy things from profanation? Was not, at that period, exclusion from the sacrament of the altar the punishment of a sinful life? The penitents lay upon the ground at the doors of the church, and entreated with many tears the intercessions of the faithful, who were permitted to enter the temple? After a long examination, and after they had proved the reality of their change of sentiments and conduct, they were absolved from the sentence of excommunication, and permitted to enjoy the communion of the sacrament. When I feel, as I now do, that amongst those penitents there were many better, much better than I, ought not my conscience to exercise severity towards me, in that wherein the church has become negligent? Ah! and when will it be again permitted to absolve me from the excommunication which it must necessarily pronounce upon me?

The members of the Reformed Church refuse, according to Zuingli's example, to acknowledge, in the Lord's supper, any thing more than an ordinance in which the memory of Jesus is celebrated. But supposing that something much more profound were included in it? Supposing it were like the birth and death of an individual, and in a still superior sense, a point of contact between them and eternity? Were it nothing more than a rite in memory of Jesus, it ought always to fill me with profound veneration; but would it be able to impart such mysterious awe, as that which I feel at it now? My feelings tell me that the sacrament is something more than the church, in which I have grown up, has taught me. And when I inquire of the Scriptures, I find that they confirm this idea, "My body, my blood!" Luther felt the power of these words; they continually pressed themselves upon his mind in their literal sense; and I confess, that the case is the same with me. It is therefore the body and blood of Christ which I receive; and as such, Christ himself; for how can I separate him from his body and blood? Could I dare to appear before him? Shall I, when eventually obliged to stand before him, be able to bear the sight? And now that he comes to me, shall I be able to receive him? I stand here on the boundaries of the invisible world; I come into contact with it; its powers communicate themselves to me; am

I in a suitable state for the beneficial reception of the sacred ordinance ? If not, it will only tend to my condemnation. Nothing on earth can be so holy as the body and blood of Jesus Christ. But with the sanctity of the object, increases, in like manner, the guilt of him who profanes it ; he who receives the sacrament unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Oh, my guilt is sufficiently great ! ought I to sin directly against the Lord himself, by the profanation of his body and blood ? No, I will rather postpone it ; after some time I may perhaps be less unworthy.

## LETTER XXVIII.

I HAVE been again very nearly on the point of falling into the snares of the enemy of my salvation. I now perceive that it was he who suggested all the scruples with which my last letter to you was filled. He is never more dangerous, than when, in order to attain his fatal designs, he makes use of that reverential awe with which the holiness and justice of God necessarily inspire us. Corrupt human nature, which always gladly remains at a distance from God, then imagines that he himself enjoins it; and rejoices at being justified in despairing, by reason itself, and the best impulses of the heart. This delusion, however, is easily dispelled; and hence the temptation is, on the one hand, a very absurd one; but, on the other, it is only the more subtle; for it addresses itself to our innate disinclination towards God by reason of sin; and regarded from this point of view, even the wisest suffer themselves to be outwitted by folly. I ought to have been acquainted with this obsolete stratagem, and my sinfulness to which it had reference. I felt indeed those inward workings, which ought to precede the reception of the sacrament; and that I ought entirely to

empty my heart of self-love, and surrender it unreservedly to Christ. But I was afraid to do this, through an impious, mean, and cowardly fear; and this I concealed under a reverence for God: and thought I honoured him, whilst by my mistrust I grievously offended him.

To this was added a sinful pride, which disguised itself under the mask of a striving after perfection. I was desirous of bringing the Lord something—a number of days or months, sanctified by diligent reading of the Bible, prayer, and perhaps also by almsgiving and works of mercy. Wretch that I am! I did not reflect that we can never bring Him anything, but only receive from him; that however well things might stand with me, I should still be unable to bring him anything; that the most perfect of his saints has never brought him any thing; that every thing depends solely upon presenting the heart, as a perfectly empty vessel, to the fountain of Divine grace, that the latter may fill it entirely; and that such an annihilation of self is more easy to the sinner during the first strong feelings of repentance and faith, than to the further advanced believer, if he have forgotten the renunciation of himself in the path of life.

I have already informed you, how, in the dreadful conflict I one night sustained, I was able fully to receive the merits of Jesus Christ, only after completely

renouncing, or rather annihilating, myself. I have once more endured this struggle, which was however easier the second time than the first. And when by degrees every thing was again taken from me, and I retained nothing for myself, my fear of Christ and of his holy sacrament also disappeared; and I was convinced that He invited me to it.

And though the latter were not the case, yet will I venture to appear. Must he always call? Can we go to him only when he commands and encourages us to do so? Does the friend repair to his friend only when expressly invited? Impelled by the wish to see him, he visits him, even though he run the risk of being troublesome to him. And ought not love to Christ to produce a similar boldness? He is become the object of my affections; his image presents itself even involuntarily to my view; I often find myself sighing in secret, 'Oh that I were where thou art!' Well then, I will go wherever He is. "Love casteth out fear," says the Apostle John, who, because he love him, ventured to lie on the bosom of him who is the centre of the universe, and to feel the beating of that powerful heart, whose goings forth in love or wrath bring life or destruction upon his creatures. When my departed spirit shall once behold him throned in the midst, between the saved and the lost; and see what infinite thrills of delight or of horror are the re-



sult of it ; I shall think neither of the blest nor of the lost ; nor of what may be awaiting me—whether heavenly felicity or endless woe : Him alone shall I behold ; and this sight will impel me to cast myself at his feet, in order that he may do with me as seemeth him good, and whatever may promote his glory. I am also now about to approach him at his table—for there he is present—unconcerned respecting the consequences.

I cannot precisely say, that I have any particular intention, or any clearly defined wish, in so doing. It is true I require consolation, for I am on the whole very melancholy ; I require invigoration for the renewal of my strength and the great labour which I must undergo. Perhaps I may find both ; perhaps only deeper melancholy, and a more profound feeling of my weakness. Be that as it may, let him deal with me according to his good pleasure ; I seek nothing besides him—not even what he bestows ; I seek Him alone.

That sinful woman, who, when he sat at meat with the Pharisee, came behind him, washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, I do not think had any particular object in view in so doing. She wished to approach him ; and in this feeling, her fear of perdition, and desire for salvation, probably disappeared. His permitting her thus to wash and wipe his feet, was perhaps even more bene-



ficial to her than the assurance that her sins were forgiven her. Thus I approach, without any other intention than that of receiving his body and blood. If this be granted me, I leave all the rest to him.

The Lord has made use of an expression, which might revive us, were we even dead through fear of his presence: "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Now, O Lord, thou knowest that I am coming to thee. I have renounced myself, so that nothing remains in my whole being but the desire after thee. Thou knowest also, that amongst the innumerable treasures which thou offerest us at thy table, my wishes and desires are fixed on thee alone. Hadst thou told us to present thee with long years of a blameless life, and many good works which have been wrought in thee—I would not approach; for I have nothing of all this. But thou only desirest that we should come, and this is given me. I come therefore, and my expectation is founded on the letter of thy promise, "I will in no wise cast out." I am well aware that thou doest more than thou promisest; and that in another place thou hast promised rest and refreshment to the weary and heavy laden who come unto thee. But my wishes do not soar so high; only do not cast me out. This thou hast promised; therefore I will now come.

## LETTER XXIX.

BEING ignorant of the usages observed in this place at the reception of the Lord's Supper, I requested Steindorf to permit me to call upon and accompany him. The communicants here proceed to the vestry immediately before Divine service, where, after an address from the clergyman, and making a general confession of sin, they receive absolution. They divide themselves into several groups, according as they feel connected by relationship, friendship, or similarity of sentiment. Such a group was just emanating from the vestry as we entered, and to our astonishment we found ourselves alone; probably because the rest had already presented themselves, and we were rather too late. Our situation, which already began to intimidate me, seemed to have in it something particularly exciting for the clergyman. After a few moments of silent reflection, he lifted up his head, and whilst regarding both of us—but particularly Steindorf, with whom he must have been acquainted—with an ardent look, he exclaimed, "Ye are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innu-

merable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.—From whence are ye come?” continued he, turning towards Steindorf; “from the house, which was formerly a habitation of joy, but which is now changed into a house of mourning—from the night of pain, which deprives the day of its light, and makes the night still more gloomy—from the grave which envelopes the remains of her whom your heart loves. And whither are you going? To Mount Zion, the city of the living God, and the heavenly Jerusalem! There is the abode of eternal joy; there shines a light which nothing can obscure; no death can ever enter there. Whither are you going? To an innumerable company of angels; and to the church of the first-born, who are written in heaven. Do you not perceive, amongst those many thousand angels, her whose company here below you enjoy no more, cognizable by her pre-eminent brightness and peculiar glory? Behold how she directs her looks towards you, and to the pledges of your love, which she has left you. Thither you are come in spirit! there you will eventually enter; be comforted with these words.

“Whence are you come?” exclaimed he, addressing me. And how was I astonished at hearing words, which could not have been better selected, had he been minutely acquainted with my state and history. And why should not that which pious divines utter at such seasons, be given them from above? “Whence are you come?” exclaimed he. “From the desert of this world, where an ungodly philosophy points to the hill which it has formed of sand, as the city of the living God; where sin hews out broken cisterns, and collects filthy water to mock the thirst of its servants; where the scene grows more and more lonely, and becomes increasingly terrific about the wanderer, until at length he remains alone with his worst enemy—with himself? Whither are you come?—to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel. Happy are you! You have found the way from the desert to the promised land—to Mount Calvary—to the cross on which the sacrifice bleeds, which atones for the sins of the world, and therefore for yours!

“To whom are ye come?” exclaimed he, regarding us both, and stretching out his hand towards us, as though he were a servant sent by the Lord to welcome us. “Ye are come to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant. By whom else but by him, can

you ever find again what you have lost, or obtain what you require? By whom else than by him can you be introduced into the company of the angelic hosts, from whose midst sin has expelled you? But where is he? He awaits you at his sacred table. Doubt not that it is he who presents himself to you under the emblems of bread and wine. When he walked upon earth, the man was only seen; yet that man was God. At his sacred supper, only earthly food is seen; but it is the body and blood of the Lord. Approach, therefore, to the joy of your Lord; but first confess that you appear, trusting to his grace, and not to your own righteousness."

The confession of sin was then read; its expressions were severe. I willingly repeated them, and rejoiced at being permitted to acknowledge my entire sinfulness and unworthiness, not merely before God, but also before other men.

We removed to the church, and Steindorf opened a pew. After I had seated myself at the end of it, he said, "Give up your place to me; my wife always sat there."

The church was crowded. I seemed to myself like a single stalk in a large corn-field, and besought the Holy Spirit that his rushing, whilst it moved the rest, might not leave me untouched.

The assembled multitude lifted up their voices in singing the solemn melody of a hymn, which was loudly accompanied by the organ. The power of the music fell at first with strong effect upon my ear, and with an oppressive feeling on my breast. After being a little accustomed to it, it sounded to me as if the rustling of the woods, and the roaring of the ocean, had partially dissolved themselves in harmony to the honour of God. I then seemed to hear the war-song of an army, which had marched out against the enemies of light, and felt excited to take part in the conflict and the victory. At the close, I imagined I heard a response from the eternal choirs, who always praise the glory of the Lord in the upper sanctuary.

The moment when the organ and the singing are mute, is so affecting and sublime, that only God, and not man, ought then to speak. This was the case here. The text preceded the exordium of the sermon. It was as follows; "I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me."

When the sermon was ended, which captivated me from the commencement to the close, a thrilling sensation pervaded me; for the communion was now about to commence.

Introductory addresses, prayers, and, finally, the



words of consecration, were pronounced from the altar. Steindorf, whom I heard weeping aloud, knelt near me. I could not weep; my heart was too much agitated. Half-formed thoughts and ideas, such as these: 'Lord, who hast delivered me, and whom I am now desirous of confessing—Sin, distress, and anxiety of my former life, which I leave behind me—Father and mother, bless your son—Jesus accept me!' flashed through my soul, like unutterable sighs, which became a prayer by their direction towards heaven. But all at once a fiery dart of the wicked one was shot at me. My thoughts adhered firmly to the unhappy duel, and the consequences which followed it; nor could I detach them from it. I tugged like a warrior anxious to hasten to the battle, at the lance, which meanwhile has taken root in the earth. It seemed as if an arm proceeded forth from the clouds to lift me up, whilst at the same time a hand held me firmly to the earth. My trepidation increased to such a degree that I lost all consciousness.

The administration of the ordinance had already commenced; and the words of the officiating clergymen, which they pronounced on presenting the bread and wine, were heard through the singing of the choir. Steindorf had risen up, and was about to approach the altar. I was still upon my knees. At length I took courage, and inwardly exclaimed, 'Lord, if thou art



in earnest with thy promise that thou wilt not cast me out, now show it! now help!' and he did so. I was able to rise up, and ascended, like a person half insensible, the steps of the altar. I there received the sacred elements. Suddenly my whole mind was filled with peace, serenity, and a tender melancholy. The supernatural certainty of standing in fellowship with the Lord, and participating in all the blessings of eternal life, had imparted itself to me. I was able to weep, and ate of the bread and drank of the wine whilst shedding plentiful but blissful tears.

After I had returned to my place, I threw myself again on my knees, but with entirely different feelings to those I had experienced before. My whole soul was dissolved in infinite thankfulness, and in the desire to belong entirely to the Lord, who had accepted me, and to glorify him, whether living or dying.

The communion lasted a long time. To me it seemed as though it might have lasted for ever; so greatly was I elevated above the limits of time and space. If the whole world had come thither, one after the other, to seek strength and consolation, it would not have seemed strange to me; I would have rejoiced on seeing them all on the way to salvation. I would gladly have seen them ascend the steps of the altar, and have unwillingly seen them descend those steps, even as I unwillingly descended

them. I now sat in a state of abstraction ; nor did I wish to think, or speak, even to the Lord himself. I only kept my eye fixed upon him, and was tranquil in his presence, in order to hear if he spoke to me.

This communion—in reality my first—passed over, like every thing here below. Happy are we, that in heaven an endless one awaits us. The benediction, which I received, and took away with me in my heart, was then pronounced upon us. With a warm pressure of the hand, I took leave of Steindorf at the church door.

[N. B. The chapter succeeding this in the original, has been omitted, in consequence of its treating solely upon the Lutheran view of the Sacrament, which is not entertained in this country.]

## LETTER XXX.

I HAVE very unexpectedly met with an old acquaintance. He is a young clergyman from Switzerland, of the name of Theophilus Gaillard, who formerly visited my native town occasionally, and whose cheerful deportment pleased me much at that time. On leaving the church, where four weeks previous I had received the sacrament, and which, since that time, I regularly attend; I met with him as he was also coming out of the church. He was the more gratified at having found me, since he knew little of the place, and had only made few acquaintances. The sight of him was to me both pleasing and painful, as were also the times which he recalled to my recollection. At my invitation, he accompanied me to my lodgings. "I should never have thought," began he jocosely, "to have found you again in this country, in this city, and, I must add, at divine worship. The church, my friend, was formerly a place which you did not even visit."

"I must retaliate upon you," answered I; "for although you are a theologian, yet you were also not often to be found there."

“What would you have?” replied he, in a frank and open manner: “I have a great inclination to be sociable; I am musical, I sing, I dance; and thus I have duly enjoyed my life. Besides, it was my intention to have abandoned divinity, and have become a tutor in some noble family. But one grows older, and more serious reflections are made; in short, I have resolved to abide by my theology, and am seeking to obtain a benefice as soon as possible in my native land.”

“And what is the object of your journey hither?” inquired I.

“Look you,” said he; “I may indeed be reproached with lukewarmness towards religion and the church; but I am nevertheless sincere in my intentions. It seemed to me that I should not be acting conscientiously, were I to enter into office before I was decided as to my views of the Christian religion, according to which I should afterwards preach. I wished to establish my principles, and form a system for myself; this was the reason of my coming to Germany.”

“Do you hope to attain your object here?” asked I with a smile.

“To be candid,” answered he, “I have exchanged emptiness for confusion. I formerly reflected little about religion; and when a different view of it pressed itself upon me, I hastened past it. But here the opposites manifest themselves too strongly; one is com-

pelled to take notice of them ; and to come to some decision : but this I have been hitherto unable to do.”

“ Make me acquainted with these opposites in theological sentiments,” said J ; and immediately perceived that this opportunity of expressing himself as a teacher, caused him pleasure.

“ You must know then,” began he, “ that there are many theologians, who will not admit of a revelation in its peculiar sense. They regard it as impossible that truths, which reason is unable by its own means to discover, can be communicated to it in an extraordinary manner. Accordingly, they contest also the historical truth of those facts, which, like the miracles and prophecies, might serve to confirm these revealed doctrines. On the contrary, the truth of Scripture history, and of the most wonderful events which it records, is defended to the utmost by others, and protected against such attacks. They regard it as a proof, that such a superior revelation has been imparted to man ; since without it his darkened reason could not have found the way to salvation. The corruption of human nature, the Divinity of Christ, and redemption through his death, are the chief articles of their faith ; whilst their opponents, as may be supposed, declare such a redemption to be unnecessary and impossible ; and find in man himself all the powers and means which he requires, in order to be good and happy.”

“ I wish you to observe,” continued he, “ that those who carry on this contest, confine themselves in reality to the historical view of the subject ; that the one party chiefly adopts the doctrines of the Christian religion, because they are founded on certain miraculous events ; and that the other rejects them along with these events. But in the systems of German divines, there is a second still more prominent tendency, which transfers the whole affair from the sphere of history to that of philosophy. Those who follow this direction, attach the greatest importance to the peculiar doctrines of religion, and to its historical development in the history of mankind ; without adducing, however, the wonderful events of sacred history for its establishment. Religion in this way is combined at one time with philosophy ; it is its popular form, and developes itself, like the latter, from the reasoning faculties ; at another, the pious feeling which dwells in individuals, and which pervades the church, is suffered to decide how much or how little of the doctrines and facts of the Christian religion is to be accepted and received.”

“ And as regards yourself,” asked I, “ have you been able to attain to any certainty and tranquillity, either in the historical or philosophical conception of religion ? ”

“ No,” replied he, “ neither in the one nor the



other. I feel myself attracted by the investigation of the books of Scripture and the events recorded in them; I examine the grounds for and against, and when I have long and maturely weighed what has been said on both sides of the question, I know less than ever what to say to it; my ideas either revolve in a circle, or stand completely still; I have made notes, but have come to no conclusion. It goes almost still worse with me, when I take up the philosophical view of the subject; for my head, I must confess, is little fitted for such speculations. I am easily fatigued, if I have to go and seek a long time in order to find that which is comparatively trifling. But even when in this way I have found something that seems to me to be truth—yet the idea troubles me, that it is only a human speculation, for which I am unable to point out to myself and others any superior credentials.”

“You have, therefore, been endeavouring,” said I, “to elevate yourself to faith by means of historical and philosophical reasoning, and have not succeeded. But ought not the thing in reality to be reversed? Must not faith have been previously excited, in order successfully to prosecute such reasoning?”

“Excited!” exclaimed he, whilst regarding me with a look of surprise, “how can it possibly be excited, unless by historical and philosophical examination.”

“By an inward feeling of distress,” replied I, “and



by a necessity, which will not suffer itself to be repelled. An individual might find himself placed in a situation, in which he knew not how to act, nor how to save himself in any other way, than by accepting the redemption offered him by Christ."

"I am astonished," exclaimed he, "at this new idea, which, I must confess, seems to me to be novel, imaginary, and, I might almost say, mystic; I am still more astonished at hearing such an idea from your lips! What do we not live to see! I could never have thought, that you would discover a new means of attaining to faith, and that you would direct me to it. Formerly, the things which occupied your head and your heart, seemed to be of a very different nature. Therefore, what was it you said? an inward feeling of distress, a necessity which would not suffer itself to be repelled, a situation in which the individual knows of no other means of escape than by receiving the redemption offered by Christ? Have you perhaps felt yourself placed in such a situation? have you accepted redemption?"

I regarded him with a fixed look, and said, emphatically, "Yes!"

"You believe therefore," inquired he—

"I believe," said I, interrupting him, "the divinity of Christ, and the forgiveness of sins by his death."

"You believe in this," asked he further, "because—

“Because,” said I, “in certain states and frames of mind, through which I have passed, those truths which were previously inanimate and dead to me, were suddenly vivified—took fire, as it were, and with their flame reached my spirit and my heart.”

“If it would not be unpleasant,” continued he, after a pause, “I should like to hear a more particular description of these states and frames of mind through which you have passed?”

“An inward experience of this kind,” said I, “though on the one hand it is the holiest and most secret thing possible, yet on the other it seems to me that what we have experienced in this respect, is a public good which ought not to be withheld from any Christian who desires to be informed respecting it.” I then continued, and related with much mental emotion, so that I was often interrupted by my own feelings, the whole history of the development of my inward life, as I have already detailed it to you in my letters. I concluded by saying, “and now I ask you, if the Holy Scriptures, which enkindled a new life in me, when all self-life had become extinct, did not prove themselves in my case to be the word of God? whether the redeeming power of the death of Christ can ever be a matter of doubt to me, after having so clearly experienced it in those dreadful conflicts? Whether I can ever regard myself as the author of

my own virtue and my own salvation ; since if I did so, I must necessarily immediately feel myself forsaken by Christ ? ”

A long pause ensued. He then exclaimed : “ Friend, you appear to me to have fallen pretty deeply into enthusiasm. Do not you perceive yourself, that in the states you have described to me, the feelings have obtained enormous power, and that the exercise of reason was restrained ? ”

“ Such states are certainly not correctly estimated,” rejoined I, “ if we suppose that feeling alone was dominant in them. What can or ought to be more overpowering than the feelings of a general’s mind at the commencement of a battle, the result of which will decide his own and his country’s fate ? But by means of this powerful excitement, his eye is not obscured, but rendered more acute ; his judgment is not confused, but more certain and rapid. All his powers are simultaneously in motion, the one supporting the other ; and thus he is enabled to do greater things, than if one of his powers alone were active. I can justly apply this comparison to myself ; for really I have also passed through a great conflict, in which nothing less than my salvation was at stake. Do you suppose, that in making such a decision, one power can be active to the exclusion of the rest ? Impossible, for all the powers are then on the stretch ;

and shall reason meanwhile sleep? Really, it is also called upon to exert itself to the utmost of its ability. It firmly and surely perceives and apprehends that which alone can satisfy the craving which is so vividly experienced, and avert the dreadful danger. Do you suppose, that such-like reflections would succeed better if they were commenced without any feeling of the importance of the object, without considering that on the judgment which we pronounce, depends the judgment which the Eternal Judge will eventually pronounce upon us? ”

“ But, if your reason was so active as you say,” observed he, “ you must either have found out new proofs, or have given the old ones another and a better form.”

“ By no means,” answered I; “ since I am not possessed of any learned theological culture, I was not able to bring before me everything that had been said for or against the Divine origin of the Christian religion. I have however taken a retrospect of its historical phenomena, and attempted, by reflection, to apprehend and connect together the doctrines which I appropriated to myself. Many things certainly remained obscure to me; notwithstanding which, the whole presented itself before me in an harmonious form, probably only because I felt myself to be in the centre, from whence it ought to be regarded. Those

who do not stand in this centre, perceive perhaps in its stead only caricatures."

"And what was it," continued he, "which placed you in this centre, as you call it?"

"I must believe," rejoined I, "that it was a higher power. This drew me, and I followed; this gave, and I received. That which I experienced was certainly not against my will; but it was not in consequence of my own will, nor by my own power."

"Hold," exclaimed he; "this is just the point where your view degenerates into enthusiasm and mysticism; for you assert that you have received a direct impression from a superior order of things."

"This I do not exactly assert," replied I; "but I believe that a superior influence, the mediate or immediate nature of which I leave undecided, operated in my case. If I may take this for granted in every considerable circumstance, why not in the most important which can possibly befall me? If I reflect upon my past life, various concatenations of intentionally arranged events present themselves to my view; all these concentrate themselves in one point, and their object is to produce this new life of faith in me. I regard as the commencement of the latter, that ever memorable morning which I have described to you; and that I, on that morning, took the Bible into my hands, the effect of which would certainly not have

been so powerful upon me, except under such circumstances—was not that a leading of Providence ? ”

“ The causes of each inward or outward event,” rejoined he, “ certainly lie in that which precedes ; and it can be fully explained and comprehended, when these causes are all ascertained. But when an event has been thus explained, it does not follow that it is of God.”

“ But I have besides that,” answered I, “ another ground for deducing that from God, which took place in me. I ascribe it to him, because it is good.”

“ Explain yourself,” said he.

“ Why will you compel me,” replied I, “ to tell the plain truth ? My former life, or rather I myself in my former life, was not good, but evil. You have perhaps heard much to my disadvantage, but I do not refer solely to this. I mean the ground of my heart, in which I felt a repugnance to God and his will, and was given up to opposite feelings. I have thus done much evil, and might, I must confess, have committed much more, for the elements of it existed within me. But even though I had led a blameless life, if the ground of my heart had remained the same, I could not in reality have regarded myself as amended. I now possess a decided, fervent, and I might even say ardent desire to submit myself both inwardly and outwardly, entirely to God and his



holy will. Formerly my efforts were directed to the attainment of every thing after which I lusted ; now they are directed to lay aside everything that may be displeasing to God. I formerly inquired, what would become of me : I now ask, what shall I become ? The commencement, I say, is made ; the wish exists to reach the prize ; but I by no means assert, that I have attained it, and that I am suddenly transformed into a saint. I have never more clearly perceived, than at present, how much I am wanting in order to this. This change in my interior is certainly something good. Ought I not to regard it as such ? Is it not incontestibly so ? You see now, that this change in me coincides with the reception of the doctrines of faith ; it is the result of them. Now if it is undoubtedly good, it is assuredly from God ; and to me it serves as a Divine confirmation of the truth of those very doctrines of faith, by which it has been effected."

"This coincidence," said he after some reflection, "may be accidental."

"Certainly not," exclaimed I, "for if it were so, the amendment of the heart might take place even by the transition from a believing to an unbelieving mode of thinking ; and I ask you if you are serious in thinking it possible ? Do you really believe, that if, instead of yielding to my present convictions, I



had exchanged them for the opposite, I should then feel within me the same desire after God, and the same readiness to submit to his laws? Certainly not! I am become different; or, if this is saying too much, I will, with the help of God, become different and better, because I believe in Christ."

"I shall always have this to oppose to your conviction," said he, shaking his head, "that it is purely individual, and that you are unable to impart it to another."

I was surprised at this objection, and answered, "That may be so, I grant you. But such is the case with me; and if I were the only individual in the world, who possessed such a conviction, I should not be the less certain of it."

"That is not exactly a good spirit," said he in a friendly manner, "that thus expresses itself in you. If you feel so assuredly, that the new life which has sprung up within you proceeds from God, and that it is produced in you without the co-operation of reason, you must also cherish the wish, from love to your neighbour, to impart it; and since reason dwells in all men, and since it proceeds upon the same principles in all, it must also be competent to act as the instrument of the universal impartation of your faith."

Something true seemed to me to lie in this objection. I reflected for a while, and then said, "Though

reason may act according to the same principles in all men, yet all have not had similar experience; and because they do not proceed from the same premises, they will not meet in the same results. Give me an individual, who has passed through similar states with myself; to whom, by his own experience, the insufficiency of human ability has been shewn, as clearly as was the case with me; such a one will understand me, and I pledge myself not only to touch his heart, but also to convince his reason. But I ask you, how shall I ever be able to bring another over to my sentiments, who contests the reality of the convictions from whence I draw my inferences?"

"It is true," rejoined he, "all men do not inwardly experience the same things; but human nature is yet the same in all, and has in every case the same necessities. Do not take amiss what I now say: that faith which is inimical to reason, and has not entered into an alliance with the latter, is not the true faith.

"Well," said I, "an idea has just occurred to me, which, crude as it is, I will lay before you. You have begotten it in me by what you have just said. Human nature has certain universal spiritual necessities, which are founded in itself. It is by means of reason that man becomes acquainted with his nature, its properties, its destiny, and also with those general

necessities. Now if reason proves—and I think she can and ought—that it is only by the instruction received from Divine revelation, and by those wondrous arrangements which it unfolds, that all that is dubious in human nature can be explained, the Divine purpose with reference to man attained, and the profoundest desires of his heart satisfied ; then reason would be reconciled with revelation ; and far from being an enemy to faith, would urgently and imperiously demand it.”

“ If, ” said he, “ you could lay such a proof, as you call it, quite ready and complete before me, who knows ? I might also believe.”

“ Such a proof, ” said I, “ has already been somewhere adduced ; it grieves me that I have not read sufficient to be able to refer you to it. I should certainly expect a great effect upon you from such a proof ; however, not so much on account of its intrinsic power, as because, as I believe, the gracious hand of God has already touched your heart, and rendered you susceptible of such an impression.”

He rose up, and parted from me with a hearty pressure of the hand ; whilst I have since frequently rejoiced at reflecting upon this conversation, which perhaps may not have been entirely fruitless, and in which that which Divine grace has wrought in me, also became much more clear to me, whilst speaking of it,

## LETTER XXXI.

SINCE my recent conversation with the young theologian, of which I gave you the particulars in my last, I have often recurred to the idea, which I then expressed, that reason itself, when a correct view is taken of human nature, the chief object of man's existence and his necessities, must lead to a belief in Divine Revelation. Meanwhile I have also begun to read the '*Pensées de Pascal*,' a man of admirable mind, and the work itself a real pearl amongst books. What force of reason, and what firmness of faith! This author, though he does not enter fully into the subject, seems to have apprehended the relation between reason and revelation much in the same manner as I have hinted at it. His sentiments upon this point seemed to me so important and instructive, that I have collected together and arranged what I found scattered through the volume, which might throw light upon the subject. You will certainly permit me to communicate it to you.

It must be confessed, that Pascal did not degrade reason; but that he acknowledged its rights, when we hear him say,

“Reason is weak indeed, if it do not advance far enough to ascertain that there is an infinity of things beyond its range. It is well to know when to hesitate, when to feel certainty, and when to submit. He who has not learnt this, has not yet determined the true province of reason.

“If everything be submitted to reason, religion will lose all that is mysterious and supernatural. If the principles of reason are violated, our religion will be absurd and ridiculous.

“Reason, says St. Augustine, would never yield, were it not aware that there are occasions when submission is expedient. It is therefore just that it should give way, when convinced that it ought to yield; and that it should maintain its ground, when convinced that it ought to stand firm; the important point is to guard against error.”

A case of this kind, in which it becomes reason to submit, he seems to have found especially in the doctrine of the fall of man, and original or hereditary sin, in consequence of the contradictions in human nature, which cannot be solved without this doctrine.

“If man,” says he, “had never been corrupted, he would feel that he was in the quiet and certain possession of truth and happiness; and if he had never been pure and innocent, he would be incapable even of the idea of felicity and truth. But wretched as we are,

and far more wretched because of these relics of our primeval greatness, we have within us the vision of enjoyment, and cannot grasp it—we see the image of truth, and embrace falsehood; incapable both of absolute ignorance and assured knowledge. What a proof that we once stood upon a lofty footing of perfection, and have declined from it!

“And what do this powerlessness and eagerness announce?—That true happiness once dwelt in man, but nothing now remains, save the trace and empty outline, which he incessantly strives to fill up with all that surrounds him; seeking in absent things the help, which things present are unable to afford him, and which both are incapable of yielding, because this infinite gulf can only be filled by an infinite and unchangeable object.”

“Man’s greatness,” it is said in another place, “is also evidenced by his being acquainted with his wretchedness. A tree does not feel itself wretched. But though the feeling of wretchedness is also wretched, yet this knowledge of our wretchedness is an uncommon greatness. The wretchedness of man proves his greatness; it is superior wretchedness—the wretchedness of a dethroned monarch.”

“It is wonderful,” exclaims he, when speaking of the innate inclination to sin and its propagation, “that without the knowledge of this mystery which



lies so remote from us, we should never know ourselves! Reason refuses to acknowledge that, by reason of the sin of the first man, those should also be guilty who are (by descent) at such a distance from him, and appear to have taken no part in his sin. This contamination seems to us not only impossible, but in the highest degree unjust. What is more opposed to the principles of our miserable justice, than that a child, which is still incapable of willing, should be condemned on account of a sin which was committed six thousand years before it had a being? Nothing can certainly be more repugnant to us than this doctrine. But without this most incomprehensible of all mysteries, we continue incomprehensible to ourselves. In this dark abyss, the knots of our being are tied; and without this mystery, man would be much more incomprehensible, than this mystery itself is incomprehensible to man."

"The doctrine of original sin is foolishness to man; and it is regarded as such. It cannot however be reproached with being irrational; for it is not asserted that reason can attain it. But this folly is wiser than all human wisdom; for what shall we think of man without this doctrine? It is an inexplicable point on which his whole constitution depends; and how could it be discovered by reason, since it surpasses reason, and since the latter, far from find

ing it upon its path, is horrified on its being presented to it?"

He who has followed the author thus far, will not be able to refrain from joining in the following exhortation to submission, which is the less to be rejected, since reason makes use of it with reference to itself:

“Confess, proud man, the impotence of reason, and the imbecility of nature;—know that man infinitely surpasses the penetration of man, and learn from thy Creator the true condition of thy being.”

## LETTER XXXII.

A FEW days ago, Theophilus Gaillard entered my apartment, and after a friendly salutation said : “ It becomes increasingly probable to me, the more I reflect upon it, that there must be a profound accordance between the requirements of reason and the doctrines of faith ; but when I attempt to elucidate this accordance, with reference to single doctrines, I do not succeed.”

“ You have therefore,” observed I, “ reflected further upon the connection between reason and revelation, and made yourself acquainted with the view I took of the subject. I have also confirmed myself in it, because an individual, who is certainly of no less consideration with you than with me, has taken up the subject almost in the same light with myself. The latter has pointed out the coincidence which you seek—at least in reference to one doctrine, that of original sin—in a manner which cannot be excelled.” I then read the extracts from Pascal to him, in the order in which I communicated them to you in my last letter.

“ All this,” said he, after I had finished, “ with

the exception of some harsh expressions, is beautiful and excellent. But why has Pascal elicited his assertion merely with reference to the doctrine of original sin—that although it is deficient in reason, yet its acceptance is enjoined by reason? Why has he not shown it in the same manner with reference to the divinity of Christ?”

“Probably,” said I jocosely, “that we may both make the attempt to-day.”

“No,” said he, “the gulf between reason and revelation is, at this part, too great for me; I am unable to throw a bridge over it.”

“One may however make the attempt,” rejoined I. “Is not likeness to and fellowship with God the supreme object of man according to reason, and is it not even recognised as such by many philosophers?”

“Whither is this remark intended to lead?” asked he.

“To this,” answered I, “that man who is at a distance from God, would probably never have attained to fellowship with him, had not God himself met him in human form.”

“After so courageous a beginning,” said he, “will you not go still further, and likewise show me, how the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins by the death of Christ accords with reason?”

“This might probably not be very difficult,” re-

joined I. "To me this doctrine appeared only strictly rational, from the first moment in which I took it into consideration. I pre-suppose, that reason imperatively requires, that the highest proof of the mercy of God should also be accompanied by the highest proof of his justice. Now I should in vain attempt to find out something in which the anger of God against sin, and his mercy toward the sinner, showed itself in a more striking manner than in the sufferings and death of his only-begotten Son, on whom he lays the accumulated guilt of man, in order to be able to spare the latter."

"You are on the march," said he; "proceed therefore, and reconcile reason with the doctrine of the Trinity."

"That it is not opposed to it," said I, "is probably undeniable. Since reason must be content to remain unable to fathom that which is infinite, it must not be permitted to reject this doctrine as inadmissible with its principles, since in this point it has no principle. Yes, it must receive it, as soon as it receives the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, which according to our admissions is not opposed to it; for how could this be possible, without a distinction of persons in the Godhead? and speaking generally, how could the Deity enter into a lively intercourse with me, without the Son and the Spirit. Monotheism, without

the Trinity, is no better than fatalism ; this we see in the Mahometan religion."

"My head grows a little giddy," said he, after a pause, "at what you have now said to me. However, you have shewn me a way, and I will try how far I can walk in it on my own strength. I must now draw your attention to something, which you seem to have overlooked, although it is uncommonly in favour of the cause you are defending. Besides the path you have proposed, there is still another, by which reason may attain to an acknowledgment of a Divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures. The proof to which I allude, is indeed the most common and best known amongst divines ; but I have never met with any book in which it is so profoundly set forth as in this."

He drew a book out of his pocket, which he put into my hands. It was a work on the dogmas of the Christian religion, which has for its author one of the most eminent divines in Germany, of the name of Storr. "Read the book," said he, "and accompany the author on the way by which he leads you, although it be rather long and tedious. After he has shown the authenticity of the books of the New Testament, the credibility of their authors, and thereby the truth of the gospel history, he finds in the latter, in the person of Jesus and in his miracles, indubitable signs of his Divine mission. From this point of view, and



because Jesus promised it to his disciples, it seems also perfectly certain, that the latter became partakers of a supernatural illumination, even as the Divine inspiration of the Old Testament is guaranteed by their expressions, and those of Christ himself. It is true, as I have already observed, that this path is circuitous and tedious. At every step, and on every assertion, hindrances and objections are thrown in the way by those of other sentiments. However, it seems to me, that the replies to these objections are at least as forcible as the objections themselves."

"I thank you," said I, "and will traverse this path, however difficult it may be. Love to the subject will give me strength to follow the author."

"To what conclusion, then, have we arrived?" said he; "for at the close of a conversation, or after finishing the perusal of a work, we ought always to give an account to ourselves of the result, in order that we may have our ideas in readiness to put forth as good coin. We have made it appear, I think, that there are three ways by which faith may be attained,—the way of inward experience, which you have trodden—the way of direct insight into the accordance of reason with the doctrines of revelation, which you have shewn me—and, finally, the way in which, by historical facts, the Divine authenticity of Scripture is established."

“ Agreed,” said I ; “ with the limitation, however, that we can attain to real faith only on the path, or rather the innumerably various paths, of inward experience ; for every one is led by Providence on a particular path. But when we have attained to it, we shall feel the necessity, both of perceiving the accordance of faith with the requirements of the other powers of the soul, as also of establishing the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, in an historical manner, both for our own satisfaction, and for the refutation of opponents. We will therefore by no means think lightly of any thing which may be of service to us with reference to this.

## LETTER XXXIII.

I HAVE recently, and in my latter letters—for my letters are always a faithful expression of what passes in my mind—been occupied with subjects which did not exactly correspond with my state of mind. My spirit felt limited and transplanted into a foreign element, whilst reflecting upon the way by which faith may be attained, and whilst defining the relative position of reason and revelation. These inquiries must indeed be made at one time or other ; but I pity those who make them the chief business of their lives, and are continually occupied by them. Faith, as long as it is reflected upon, is kept at some distance from our spirits ; it cannot fully infuse itself into them, nor fill them, and bear its fruits. But I burn with desire to experience its effects, and those of the Spirit of God in my heart ; I long to be enlightened, perfectly tranquillized and comforted, and especially to be sanctified by him. When I fix my eyes, thoughts, and efforts upon this latter object—an inward witness tells me that I am fulfilling that for which I was designed ; I then feel, so to speak, comfortable and at home.

I have found, that in order to approach this desired

aim, and not suffer myself to be drawn away from it by the movements of the inward and outward world, I must give my inward and outward life stability and a firm direction. This appears to me the more necessary, since I am destitute of any sphere of action, and am bound by no outward duties ; therefore if I do not bind and fetter myself, I shall be in danger of being moved and carried away by every wind of humour, and every accidental circumstance.

The first thing to which I think I must attend, and to which, to my great astonishment, so little attention is paid—for none of the systems of morality or religious works with which I am acquainted takes sufficient notice of it—is an incessant wandering of the mind, which listens to no law of the will. This is at least the case with me ; and I believe I may regard it as an universal disease of human nature ; for it is but too closely connected with our corrupted state ; and our separation from the supreme good must necessarily result in a restless commotion of all our inward powers. However, as I am not writing a book upon the subject, but am only unfolding my heart to you, I can speak of this phenomenon merely with reference to myself in particular.

It is the imagination from whence this irregular motion proceeds. It has always been very powerful in me, not so much in the formation of new imagery,

as in holding fast and recalling that which has once passed through my mind. To this also belong, besides the images of things which are real, those innumerable impressions made upon me by poetical works, which I have eagerly read from my childhood up, and all the dreams of passion in which I have indulged for so long a period. Thus I bear a world about in me ; but such a world as obeys no laws, but is like a chaos of fermenting elements. Is it possible ever to know what ideas imagination may present to me in any given moment, or what other ideas and feelings may connect themselves with them ? During my occupations, and even when I pray, the intentional train of thought is often interrupted by a completely involuntary one. It is still worse when my studies, and with them the direction of my mind to a certain object, are terminated for a time. I could be afraid of the moment in which I lay aside the pen or the book, in order to recreate myself by a walk in the open air, on account of the dreadful commotion which immediately commences within me. The worst, nay I might almost say the most appalling, are the moments after awaking, or before going to sleep. The most melancholy, tormenting, and confusing ideas present themselves to the mind, on first coming to itself out of the insensibility of sleep ; just as if a hostile force were desirous of depriving it, for the whole of the

day, of the use of its powers. When my eyes close, and the other faculties of the soul, wearied like the body, would be glad to rest with it, imagination does not feel the same necessity; it is then perfectly at liberty; its images follow each other more rapidly, and acquire, by the darkness of the night, something awe-inspiring and terrific. Now if there be any passion or care dwelling in the mind, you may suppose that the images of its object break through every other train of thought, present themselves in guarded and unguarded moments to the mind, become the centre of a peculiar circle of imagery, and that from this united force of the affections and imagination, the most fearful effects may proceed. A passion thus becomes invincible; for what avails the resolution to forget its object, since imagination continually places it before us? We would gladly divest ourselves of all anxious solicitude; but are we able to do so, when the circumstances by which it is excited are ever present to the mind? We would gladly forgive an insult or a mortification, if we were not continually reminded of it against our will.

It is possible for a man, who has once thought of some dreadful deed that he might commit, really to commit it, because he is unable to divest himself of the idea of it. It is possible for a person in this manner to become insane, in consequence of ideas



becoming permanent in him by the force of passion and imagination; or because a mass of such ideas, which he is no longer able to distinguish from reality, fluctuate in his mind. But though these dreadful effects might not ensue, yet it is conceivable that amongst these thoughts, there would be many which were evil, and amongst this imagery, much that was shameful; and what torment must arise from this source to a mind, which sincerely seeks that which is good, and sees itself inwardly so profaned and polluted against its will.

It therefore seemed to me supremely necessary to simplify my inward life, to divest imagination of its luxuriant and dangerous exuberance, and by some single, great, and sacred idea to expel its multifarious and reprobate imagery. Of what nature was this to be? I only know of one, which the longer it is considered, the more it ravishes; which is possessed of more intrinsic value than all earthly and intellectual things, because, though taken from reality, it is still ideal; which captivates the affections by the union of that which is the most sublime and the most diversified; which is deserving of our love; and which seems destined to purify the mind, and expel from it all imagery and every inclination, with the exception of a few images that have an affinity to it, and of a few inclinations connected with the love which it imparts. It is the image of Jesus! Oh I

have called upon him to cause it to rise like a serene morning sun upon my beclouded and tempest-shaken heart ; to enable me always to retain it in my memory, and thus to forget the whole world, with its manifold phenomena ; and graciously to assume himself the sway over my interior, the blinded powers of which had combined for my destruction.

At the same time it became apparent to me, that I ought myself to prevent, as much as possible, the accumulation of imagery within me, and the roving of my feelings to outward things ; and that to this end I ought entirely to renounce one of the two amusements to which I was uncommonly attached—the theatre ; and considerably to limit the other—the reading of poetical works. Whether it is permitted the Christian to visit the theatre or not, is a question I leave entirely undecided. But in reference to myself, light has been given me respecting it, and I should be acting very improperly if I did not follow it. How can I, who have had so much to suffer from the volatility of my imagination and my mind, and must often feel horrified at the forms which present themselves to me, —how can I dare, by visiting the theatre, to augment the number of these images and impressions ? The greater part of them are not entirely pure and unexceptionable ; but even the most innocent and the purest would conceal or obscure the Divine image, which I wish always to behold, and which ought

always to stand radiant and replete with celestial splendour in my mind ; and hence they would be injurious to me. The case is much the same with poetic works, especially when they contain fictitious events. Real historical facts always stand connected with the Lord, whether they have reference to the extension of his kingdom, or as opposed to it ; this may also be the predominant feeling in poetry, and then it will always be welcome to me. But to stray under its guidance, urged on by my curiosity into regions which lie entirely remote from the Lord and his kingdom, must no longer be expected of me.

Oh when shall I be so poor, as inwardly to possess nothing besides Jesus, and unceasingly think of and contemplate him alone !

In accordance with these principles, I have prescribed to myself a regular and fixed plan for my inward life during the whole of the day, from morning till evening. Immediately after awaking, I seek to lay the foundation of the life of Christ, which I intend to lead during the day. This foundation can be no other than self-knowledge, repentance, and humiliation. I empty, every morning, the bitter cup of the recollection of all my earlier and later sins, and yield myself up without reserve to the glow of shame, and to the violent pain which then pervades me. I sink down, ever deeper, till I see myself standing on the

lowest step; I then feel firm and secure, and great peace and serenity enter into my mind, from whence all self-complacent volatility has disappeared. I then lift up my eyes to the Lord, as the only helper, who can deliver me from my reproach; as the central point of salvation, to which by his grace I am able to attain, notwithstanding the greatness of my wretchedness; and as the example which, notwithstanding my reprobate condition, I am able, in some faint degree, to imitate. To whom else ought I to direct my eyes in such a state of mind, and in such a profound feeling of the necessity of aid? And I have always experienced, by so doing, a perfect internal serenity, and have been always assured anew, by his spirit, that he would accept me, and lead me, by ways known to him alone, to my desired aim.

After spending about an hour, or even a longer time, in such meditations, I take up the New Testament, which I intend reading from beginning to end in the original tongue. How I now rejoice at being able to make a holy use of a variety of knowledge I formerly acquired! I do not reject learned investigations; I follow them as long as they contribute in any measure to correct my acquaintance with Divine things; but that which has no reference to this, does not concern me.

This reading of the Holy Scriptures is succeeded

by a variety of occupations in the remaining hours of the forenoon and afternoon, which are appointed for study, and in which the exercise of my intellectual powers is always connected with the superior object of edification.

Refreshment and recreation as much as I require, I find in a few social circles to which I have access, in which earthly things are spoken of in a religious manner and spirit, and subjects of a religious nature are treated with cordiality, and at the same time without any intermixture of sanctimoniousness.

The last hours of the evening always find me alone ; for the repose of night requires its preparation as well as the occupation of the day. I read a few Psalms ; I pour out my necessities before the Lord, with the anxious cry of the Psalmist, and beseech his compassion ; in the glowing language of the Psalms I thank him for the aid he has already granted, and will increasingly grant me. This is followed by some chapters from a book, which certainly deserves most to be read next to the Bible—I mean the “Imitation of Christ,” by Thomas à Kempis. However I willingly lay it aside, when I perceive that my thoughts have sufficiently dwelt upon it, so as to be able to elevate themselves to heaven alone. At the recollection of the various events of my life, I again sink into profound grief at myself, and into sweet admiration of

Divine grace. I continue long upon my knees, in order to thank God, that he has not rejected me ; that he has permitted me to come to him, and enabled me to pass the day, now brought to a close, without the commission of any great sin. I entreat him completely to dry up and eradicate the poisonous spring, from whence so many evil thoughts and lusts rise up in me, and not suffer me to fall back into any of the transgressions I detest. I remember the deceased, with whom I was acquainted here below, and entreat him, not to save them, for I hope they are saved already, but that he would strengthen them to bear the great weight of glory he has in reserve for them. I remember the living, who love me, whom I love, and to whom I am indebted for benefits bestowed upon myself or those with whom I am connected ; and I commend them, both as to spiritual and temporal things, to the care and favour of the Lord. By means of his beloved image, which I try to keep always present to my view, I seek to banish the swarm of images and ideas which flutter around the wearied spirit ; and whilst holding it fast, defend myself, when the senses sink into repose, from all the attacks of darkness which are wont to assail me in those moments.



## LETTER XXXIV.

I HAVE now to inform you of a resolution I have taken, which you will probably not have anticipated ; and that is, to leave a country in which the Lord has guided me so wonderfully, for the purpose of drawing me to himself, and return, under his protection, to my own land and my native town.

You have often kindly inquired, in your letters, when the moment would arrive that we should see each other again : and I have been hitherto unable to give you any decisive answer. I am now able to say, that if God permit, I will embrace you in the course of a few weeks ; for I purpose seeing you before I arrive at my native place.

My life had continued a long time as I have described it to you in my last letter. My time was divided between prayer and those serious researches which stand in connection with the kingdom of God. I had little society, and there was no social circle of which I had become an indispensable member. All at once I became apprehensive, that such a mode of spending my life could not be well pleasing to the Lord, nor be in accordance with its primary object. In con-

sequence of my investigations, the form of the kingdom of God presented itself before me every day more clearly. The Missionary braves the storms of the ocean, and amidst a thousand privations and dangers, preaches Christ to the nations who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. The clergy preach the word of God, and administer the sacraments; and when they have accomplished these engagements, they have performed perhaps the greatest work that has been accomplished on the whole earth that day. By the instrumentality of the teachers of the young, all the treasures of religious and scientific information, which earlier ages had acquired, are communicated. They who stand at the helm of civil or ecclesiastical affairs, which they regulate by laws, are instrumental in promoting the honour of God, so far as they set the Lord before them. Nor is there any proper and honest employment which does not stand in connection with him and his kingdom, as soon as it is performed with reference to him.

Whilst every one is thus active around me, I am standing inactive and stationary. I am drawing from the spring that is flowing near me, but present no one the refreshing draught. All that I acquire is lost in myself, and my talent is buried in the earth. After a day spent in unceasing prayer, investigation, and mental labour, I am compelled to think that the day-

labourer, who, after a short prayer, extinguishes his light, and wearied by his exertions sinks into a profound sleep, has better employed his time than I. Dissatisfaction with myself, and a mental uneasiness, which no intellectual remedies were successful in removing, left me the only alternative of fatigue in outward employment.

At length, therefore, I came to the resolution of procuring to myself the feelings of a labourer at the close of the day, and of wearying myself, not only inwardly but outwardly, in the Lord's service. I am ready, for His sake, to renounce the independence so highly esteemed, which I have hitherto enjoyed, and to place myself in a situation, in which I can promote his honour and his glory, even in the capacity of a subordinate member. There will be no want of opportunity for this. The State and the Church afford employment to many; and a situation is not easily denied to any one of sufficient abilities and moderate pretensions, in which he may usefully labour. But even should I be rejected, yet opportunities of usefulness would be afforded in those voluntary associations, which are devoted to the removal of so many mental and bodily wants, to which the provision made by the church and the state cannot always extend itself.

For a time I was dubious whether I should commence this new mode of life here in Germany, in the place

where I am at present residing, or in my native country; but I soon decided in favour of the latter. We are under obligation to devote our powers and faculties to the benefit of that nation, into which the hand of the Lord has by birth incorporated us, unless express intimations of providence enjoin us the contrary. And since my former life has been offensive to my fellow-citizens, it is now the more incumbent upon me to show them, that by Divine grace both the heart and the life may be entirely changed.

My departure is fixed for this day week. I shall leave friends here, who are dear to me; and amongst them none more so than poor, solitary Steindorf. What important things have I experienced with him and by his means! Taking leave of him will cause me at least very painful feelings.

## LETTER XXXV.

*17th of June, 1827.*

FROM the name of the place from whence I write, you will see that I am already on my return, and that I have made a considerable approach to the borders of my native land. Oh how the air which blows upon me from that quarter, awakens in me a sweet desire again to behold the place where I first drew my breath ; where my childhood was spent ; and where the mortal remains of my father and mother were committed to the bosom of the earth, there to await their resurrection !

The inn, and even the apartment I occupy in it, are the same which I inhabited for a few days on my journey to Germany, and from whence I addressed one or more of those letters to you, in which I poured out all the sorrows of a mind at that time far from God. Heaven be praised, how different now ! To-day is also the eve of my birth-day ; to-morrow it will therefore be a year, since that memorable day, when, on opening the Bible, I was for the first time conscious of the powerful drawing of the Father to the Son. But to-day is Sunday ; I have attended Divine

service, and thanked the Lord in his temple, for the abundant blessings of the past year, which he has caused me to experience on German ground. Oh may his blessing continue to rest upon that country collectively, and especially on the place where I found favour in his sight ! May his blessing be upon those who preach there, and upon those who hear ; upon those who administer the holy sacraments, and upon those who partake of it ; may he be with the living, and hover over the graves of the dead, and pour himself out into the hearts of those who visit them. I entreat this blessing in particular in behalf of my dear Steindorf, who by his last conversation with me, has placed the crown upon all the benefits which heaven had previously bestowed upon me through him.

He knew that I was about to depart, and he approved of my intention. " You are come to take leave," said he, as I entered, looking into my moistened eyes. I answered in the affirmative ; tears also forced themselves into his eyes ; and for a while we sat opposite each other in silence.

" How can I depart," said I at length, interrupting this silence, " without expressing the feelings of my grateful heart in a greater degree than I have hitherto done to you, who through grace have become instrumental to my salvation ! The words which I heard from your lips at the corpse of your beloved consort,"



(here our eyes involuntarily turned towards the place in the room where she had laid,) “and on that evening at her grave, have also brought me several steps nearer to that heaven, where you already walk with her. My destiny, as you have yourself acknowledged, now calls me away from hence, to take my part in labouring for the glory of God amongst the connections in which I was born ; but it pains and affects me deeply, that I must now be deprived of you, of your presence, your awakening conversation, and your edifying example.”

“We shall always continue connected,” said he, with deep emotion ; “yes, we shall be near each other in the Lord, to whom we both belong.”

“I will stedfastly retain his image before the eyes of my spirit,” rejoined I ; “and with his, yours, as one of his true disciples, will be ever present to me.”

“You spoke of the Lord’s image,” said he, as if he had not entirely understood me.

“Certainly,” said I, “I will so habituate my heart and imagination to it, that it shall be ever present to them, so that it may be to me a consolation in affliction, and a defence in temptation.”

“Why,” asked he, “would you content yourself with his image, since you may possess him in reality ; and why do you seek him for any particular purpose,

who ought always to be loved and sought for his own sake ? ”

“ I do not understand you,” said I.

“ When you love him,” replied he, “ you will soon understand me. Supposing your father and mother were still alive, and you could resort to them whenever you pleased, would you content yourself, instead of doing so, with only contemplating their portraits ; and would it be right to do so, even in moments when you required comfort and encouragement ? ”

“ How shall I apply this simile ? ” inquired I ; “ I could find my parents as long as they were here below, but how can I find the Lord ? ”

“ And do you still put such a question as this ? ” asked he with astonishment. “ You have found him, and have only now the trouble to comprehend the greatness of the gift bestowed upon you. You have more than his image ; you possess him himself.”

“ Taking it for granted that I have found him,” rejoined I, “ what is further to be done ? for you seemed to reprove me on some other account.”

“ After having found him,” answered he, “ you must for his own sake, and from pure and disinterested love to him, maintain a continual and affectionate intercourse with him. He will then be your consolation in suffering, and your protection in seasons of temptation. But if, instead of love to him, any one of these inten-

tions is predominant in you when applying to him, you will receive the expected aid, at least not immediately, nor in full measure."

"The inward life of the Christian," said I, after some reflection, "ought therefore, if I rightly understand you, not to be a contemplation of the image of Christ, but a converse with Christ himself?"

He rose up, paced the room a few times with hasty steps, then placed himself before me, and said, "Who preserved me from being overwhelmed here, when my dear wife drew her last breath? Was it the Lord's image, or he himself? Who accompanied me, when I wandered about here, during the first horrible nights after my heavy loss? Was it the Lord's image, or he himself? Who is now with me, when I am quite alone, and strengthens me to bear my solitude? Is it the Lord's image, or he himself?"

"I cannot refrain," said I, "from honouring your profound and pious feelings, and from entering into them to a certain extent. I have also read many things in good books, which sounded very similar to what you have now said. But"—

"But what?" asked he, a little excited.

"But I have resolved, once for all, to be led and guided solely by the Scriptures, which are the word of God, and to derive from thence the features of the model of a Christian life; and this word of God"—

"Do you perhaps intend to say," interrupted he,

“that they say nothing of such an intercourse with Christ? Has not Christ promised to be with us, even till the end of the world; and to be in the midst of us when two or three are assembled in his name? And after such promises, shall we consider him as at a distance, or as near and present? Has not Christ promised that he will come with the Father, and take up his abode with those that love him; and may I not speak of holding converse with him, when he has spoken of a dwelling in us, which implies something infinitely more, and a connection much more close and intimate? Did not the Apostle hold such a converse with him, when he besought him to take away the thorn in the flesh, under which he was suffering, and was immediately enjoined by the Lord to let his grace suffice him? Did he not necessarily hold such a converse with him, in order to be able to say, ‘I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me?’ Does he not enjoin the maintenance of this fellowship with Christ upon those to whom he wrote, when he says, “Your life is hid with Christ in God.” And does the beloved disciple, who lay upon the bosom of Jesus, not only whilst the latter sojourned here upon earth, but also after he had departed hence—does John intend anything else, when he represents the Lord as knocking at the door, ready, if any one open it, to enter in and sup with him?”

“You intend therefore,” rejoined I, “by this fellowship with Christ, to maintain within you a sublime and continual ecstasy, and to secure a superior degree of enlightening?”

“Who speaks of ecstasy and enlightening?” replied he; “I do not even allude to any transport of feeling. This intercourse with Christ would not be what it is—I mean something real—if it were to transpose my mind from its wonted frame into one which was entirely uncommon. It is only the play of the imagination that deceives us; reality always brings with it something of a tranquillizing nature. I maintain that those who hold such converse with Christ, are perfectly sober-minded individuals, and possess no other enlightening, nor pretend to it, than such as every Christian may enjoy.”

“But what benefit do you derive,” inquired I, “from your intercourse with Christ?”

“You have Christ himself,” answered he; “and this is certainly all that you can desire. You possess him, and may speak to him in the obscurity of faith, even as those speak to him who see him face to face in heaven. Often you will feel profoundly grieved, when he manifests his nearness to you, and his care over you, only by a more severe and immediate chastisement for the sins you commit; when he withdraws from you the consciousness of this presence—



although he never removes far, since you can no longer live without it—in order to punish you or put you to the test, and thus leaves you only to your own wretchedness. But still you possess him, and with him are content and satisfied.”

“But these people,” said I, “have a name from which I shrink.”

“What name is that?” inquired he.

“Mystics,”\* answered I.

“In this sense,” rejoined he, “the Apostles Paul and John, and even Luther himself, were mystics. If there is any disgrace in the appellation, we will not fear to share it with such men as these. But in earlier times, the term had no such opprobrious meaning. The word mysticism was not then used, but ‘mystic divinity ;’ the value of which was acknowledged, and it quietly pursued its course along with scholastic divinity. Amongst its admirers are numbered such men as Taulerus, Thomas à Kempis, Francis de Sales, and Fenelon, whose names are justly honoured by posterity. It pleases people in the present day to indicate by this term, whilst mistaking its

\* This term is much more frequently used in Germany than in this country ; being, in many parts, applied to all who profess anything more than the outward form of religion.—

*Note of the Translator.*



former signification, all that is confused and absurd that has ever attached itself to religion; and thus a bugbear has arisen, which is employed at one time against those to whom it properly applies, and at another against such as are falsely so called."

"But are there in reality any of the former?" asked I.

"Certainly," replied he.

"And how are they distinguished from the latter?" inquired I further.

"Those to whom the term mystic is improperly applied, seek, in their intercourse with Christ, himself alone, and that sanctification which is a necessary consequence of fellowship with him. Far from favouring a revelling in pious feelings, they describe those who are always desiring excitement and spiritual refreshment, as only novices in the career of spiritual life. They abhor the pretending to a superior illumination, and cleave firmly to the Scriptures as the only standard of faith and life."

"And the real mystics?"

"Are distinguished by this, that they pretend to possess a superior knowledge of Divine things than Scripture affords; that they make exceptions for themselves, with reference to the precepts of the Divine law, to which all men are subjected; and that, despising inward and outward activity, they seek to

elevate themselves, by a mere passive feeling, to a degree of perfection and blessedness unattainable in this life."

"Let us therefore pass by the term," said I, "which is of little importance. The individuals of whom we will now speak, make the essence of the Christian life to consist in intercourse with the Saviour; but to this I cannot yet agree: for there are certainly many good Christians, who are unacquainted with such an intercourse, and do not maintain it; and he who stands, or supposes he stands, in such a fellowship with Christ, must, from his superior station, look with contempt upon them."

"He will never do so," answered he, "for he well knows that there are various degrees of spiritual life; and he distinguishes those who possess it, not so much according to the degree at which they have arrived, as the fidelity with which they employ the grace granted them. He that does so will arrive at the hidden life of Christ in God; and perhaps even lead such a life, without being himself clearly conscious of it. He will often possess the thing, and yet be terrified at the name which is falsely applied to it, when he first hears it; perhaps this is also the case with you."

"Of the inward life," replied I, "I know in reality nothing but repentance."

"You are therefore acquainted," said he, "with what is meant by holding converse with Christ."

"Is that one and the same thing?" inquired I.

"Certainly," answered he, "for do we not die to ourselves in repentance?"

"I really think," said I, "that repentance is what is properly called spiritual death."

"It is therefore," continued he, "an approach to the life of Christ. For Scripture, which in this is your only teacher as well as mine, says, 'Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.'"

"I am dead," exclaimed I; "dead by repentance; and yet I feel that I am destitute of this hidden life in Christ."

"One may die frequently," rejoined he, very seriously and significantly.

"Explain yourself," said I.

"I mean," replied he, "that even repentance has its various stages: and that we cannot descend to a deeper one, without elevating ourselves in a similar proportion into the life of Christ."

"Various stages of repentance!" repeated I with astonishment. "What can I do more than fully acknowledge and repent of my sins and corruptions?"

"No one acknowledges them fully all at once," answered he; "and in the beginning of repentance no one would probably be able to bear the sight of

himself entirely, such as he really is. But when the individual has become somewhat stronger, and the Lord sees that he is desirous of making progress, he then unfolds to him his inward darkness, and suffers him to cast a look into one abyss after the other."

"I cannot deny," rejoined I, "that what you say is confirmed by my own inward experience. I repented superficially before I attained to faith; and then more and more deeply, the more I penetrated into faith. Can you also distinguish several stages of repentance in your life?"

"Certainly," replied he. "The lowest to which I have attained, was that to which I was precipitated by the last stroke which has befallen me. My whole soul was filled with the idea of my sin and misery, and the decrease of my own life—the life of self—was the increase of life in Christ. But how much is still wanting, before I am able to say with the Apostle, 'Now I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me!' Self still exists in me, which is desirous of referring every thing to itself rather than to the Lord. Until this is taken away, I shall not entirely possess Christ."

"Let him cast me," exclaimed I with enthusiasm, "from one abyss of repentance, from one horrible feeling of the knowledge of myself, into another; let him take every thing from me, if he only gives me himself."

“He will do it,” said Steindorf with emotion, “if you always show him this readiness. But you must know, that the second repentance is more difficult than the first, and the third than the second ; for each of them seems to be the last ; each one may nourish the self-complacency which resists the descending a step lower.”

“May the Lord,” said I, “remove this self-deception from me, and graciously enable me to resign myself in simplicity to his guidance !”

“This is also my prayer,” said he. “On the whole, the utmost we are able to do, is to yield ourselves up to his guidance.”

We had risen up, holding each other by the hand, and he continued feelingly and solemnly as follows : “May the Lord accompany you back to your native country, and cause, from what you have here experienced, very blessed effects to result, both to yourself and others ! May the Lord abide with you, and cause his light to shine into the darkness which envelopes me ! Here before his face we conclude our bond of Christian friendship, and hope that nothing will ever sever it, because it is formed in him. We both give ourselves anew to the Lord, entirely and without reserve, for a possession ; that he may do with us as seemeth him good ; that he may conduct us ever deeper into his death, by which we must die

to the world, in order to attain to his kingdom and himself. There we shall meet again, should we see each other no more here below ; there he will gather together all his people, whom death or distance had separated."

I wept in his arms, and he wept with me. On reaching my lodgings, I threw myself on my knees, and repeated the vow, to belong to no one but the Lord.



## LETTER XXXVI.

I CANNOT yet prevail upon myself to leave Germany, and am at present detained in a little parsonage, belonging to a small village in one of its southernmost provinces.

I was soon overtaken, on my slow return, by a letter from Steindorf, in which he rendered it in some measure incumbent upon me to visit the Rev. Mr. Strahl, whose residence he mentioned to me. "I know him," said he, "through the medium of a correspondence, which he has carried on with me for some time; and am convinced, that even a short intercourse with him may be very salutary to you."

I gladly followed these directions. I travelled a whole day's journey from the high road; passed the night in a little town, where I left my carriage; and the following morning proceeded further with a guide. I had still many tedious miles to walk. Towards noon I reached the little village, which contains a few hundred Protestant inhabitants, and is environed on all sides by a Catholic population.

There was something peculiar and friendly in its appearance. Entirely surrounded by hedges, above

which lofty fruit trees reared their heads, it presented a mass of verdure, which covered the black roofs of the houses. My way led me past the church-yard, which was surrounded by a low wall; and I lingered a moment in order to consider the church. It is small, old, of Gothic architecture, and seems to have been formerly a Catholic chapel. It is surrounded by bushes and trees, the lime and the elder, which, with their waving shadows, circle the graves of the dead. I proceeded further, and reached a more open space, on which the parsonage is situate. The stillness that prevailed, seemed to render it dubious whether the house was inhabited, or whether its inmates were all of them numbered with the dead. I knocked, and was informed by an aged servant, that I should find the clergyman in the garden, which immediately adjoined the house. A man of about sixty years of age soon came towards me, under the lofty trees, whose luxuriant foliage only occasionally permitted the ardent rays of the mid-day sun to shine through them. His form was slender, his gait noble, although inclining a little forwards, as is generally the case with those who suffer in the chest. His head was only scantily covered with grey locks. His features expressed benevolence, refined feeling, and superior intellectual capacity. His dress was not

neglected, as is frequently the case with a solitary, but bore the appearance of careful attention.—I presented to him the introductory letter which Steindorf had sent me ; he read it, and whilst folding it together again, and putting it into his pocket, he said, “ It is very kind of Mr. Steindorf to afford me the pleasure of becoming acquainted with you. Be assured you are heartily welcome, particularly since I see from the letter that in you I am receiving a believing Christian. But you have need of repose,” continued he, “ and refreshment. My house, in which I dwell alone and without a family, can only offer you inferior entertainment ; however I hope you will remain with me at least until to-morrow.”

He now conducted me to a place in the middle of the garden, where a table and some wooden rustic seats were erected under two aged and thickly interwoven elm trees, which extended their branches far around. An open and beautiful prospect here presented itself from the side opposite the house and the village. The garden there formed an eminence, at the declivity of which a stream flowed past, occasionally carrying upon its bosom a few sailing boats. Beyond the river, the country gradually becomes elevated, until in the distance the hills ascend to a considerable height. The whole of this slope is covered with cornfields, forests, villages and towns

whose turrets soar above the foliage which surrounds them.

We took our dinner in the cool shade of these elms, whilst enjoying the heart-cheering prospect. I cannot exactly affirm that Mr. Strahl laboured to turn the conversation exclusively to spiritual subjects; he let it proceed in its natural course; and was able, at every turn, to introduce something that was novel and important. He seems to me to be a man of no mean acquirements, and still greater experience, who is not unacquainted with the persons and subjects which have attained consideration both in Germany and in other countries. This may be accounted for from the circumstance, that before he retired to this village, he occupied, for several years together, a ministerial office in the metropolis.

The evening approached before we were aware, whilst engaged in conversation; which had been carried on in the afternoon, as well as during dinner. Strahl conducted me into the apartment prepared for me. Whilst wishing that I might pass a tranquil night under his roof, his language unconstrainedly became a prayer, in which he commended me, both soul and body, to the Lord's gracious protection. Wearied in body, with a tranquil heart, and surrounded by a noiselessness which can only prevail at night in a village, I soon closed my eyes, and did not open them until the

sun was high in the heavens. After I had dressed myself, Strahl entered my room, and said, " You must not leave me to-day ; for we have hitherto scarcely touched upon the subject which is of the greatest importance to us both." I accepted the invitation to remain ; which being every day renewed, I have already spent a week in the hospitable house of this dear friend, whom the Lord has presented to me. In my next letter, I will give you an account of the substance of our conversations, by which my views have in many respects been enlarged.

## LETTER XXXVII.

I HAVE conversed with Mr. Strahl on the tendency of the past and the present, in a religious and theological point of view, and am of opinion with him, that the historical, philosophical, and spiritual, have been, and still are, the predominant features. All three may be traced back to the primary elements of human nature.

There are a great number of individuals who attach much greater value to that which is real, than to that which exists only in the world of ideas; and who, on that very account, act, in their connection with others, in a very affectionate and animated manner; these individuals are usually said to be of an active and social disposition. When such persons are awakened to believe the Gospel, they are more capable than others of feeling the necessity of the historical basis of faith. The events of sacred history present themselves in a lively manner to their view, and are not without influence upon their hearts. The occurrences also which have principally operated towards the formation of the Christian church, are important in their estimation; they gladly seek to become acquainted with them;



and Divine truth is apprehended by them, in preference, under that form in which the church has represented it in its confession of faith. This disposition, though otherwise so laudable in itself, would justly expose itself to censure, were it to reject all the other requirements of the heart and mind, and to endeavour to establish itself at their expense. Such was the case in the Romish church, whilst striving to unite the Christian world by forcible means, so as to form one whole. Even in the Protestant church it has sometimes degenerated into an obstinate adherence to human formulas, and into hierarchical pride ; but in general it there exhibits itself in a nobler form, and manifests itself by more salutary effects. It forms—connected at one time with learning, and at another with the gift of eloquence—two particularly estimable classes amongst Protestant divines. The one, by their comprehensive acquirements, are enabled to defend that which is supremely dear to them—the historical facts of Divine revelation—against the attacks of infidelity. The other edify the people by their eloquent discourses : for whilst bringing before them the events of sacred history in all their importance—founding their instruction upon them, and placing in connection with them the minutely defined relative position of mankind,—they never fail to excite the most lively interest in the minds of their hearers,

and gain over many to the faith. The church, as an outward social institution, will ever be of the greatest importance to all those who cherish these sentiments, whether clergy or laity, because it satisfies the desire, so ardently felt by them, to unite with others of similar sentiments in their most important concerns. It happens however, occasionally, that such individuals feel repelled by the defects of the outward church, and suffer themselves to be deceived by their own pride; or let themselves be too strongly attracted by the distinguished talents of some individual teacher. Their social impulse then frequently occasions a separation from church fellowship, for the purpose of establishing closer religious connections. In the latter case, the belief which had emanated from a more extended source, is often faithfully preserved by reciprocal incitement. But their members not unfrequently become so hardened in their sectarianism, that they recognise truth only under the impress of their traditional mode of expression; and harshly and uncharitably reject and condemn other believers, because they do not perceive this phraseology in the expressions of the latter.

Like the historical tendency, the philosophical is also founded in human nature; namely, in the necessity which is felt to arrange the Divine truths which are offered to us, and to perceive their necessity ac-

according to the laws of the reflecting mind. It is in vain and unjust to reject this requirement as inadmissible, which has been sometimes done on an historical footing; but it is also, alas! no less true, that, in the endeavour to treat the doctrines of faith philosophically, faith itself has often disappeared. Sometimes the facts of sacred history have been dealt with in a hostile manner; they have been declared to be untrue; ideas have been put in the place of contemplation; and the sum and substance of religion has been set aside in a manner intolerable to the spirit of a true philosophy. Or else these facts have been presumptuously passed over, and the proof to be drawn from them, in favour of the truth of the Divine doctrine, has been scorned, solely for the purpose of establishing that which the doctrine ought to contain in itself. Though this may be partially granted, yet it can never be denied, that the annunciation of individual, definite, Divine decrees, which forms the substance of those doctrines which are precisely the chief in the Christian religion, needs authenticating by facts. In such a mode of treating religious doctrines, the safest way has not been taken. The commencement ought to be made from some point within the given sphere of Divine revelation; one of its doctrines ought to be placed at the head, and from thence the rest ought to be endeavoured to be developed. Human nature

ought to be more minutely investigated, in order to show, that in its irrejectionable requirements, which can only be satisfied by means of these doctrines, and that in its object, which can only be attained by their means, the necessity of these doctrines is founded. Human nature would then, according to Lord Bacon's ingenious simile, be the lock, and Divine revelation the key : from a minute comparison of both, the result would be, that as the key is made for the lock, so revelation is made and destined for human nature ; and that the one cannot be thought of without the other. Instead of this, however, the leading principle, according to which the doctrines of faith ought to be treated, is usually borrowed from some existing philosophical system : but such a system, being the work of man, is partial and limited and the doctrines of faith can never be forced into it, without suffering disfigurement and mutilation.

There is still another religious and theological tendency, which existed in former times much more extensively than at present, and which is properly termed the spiritual tendency. This is also founded upon the basis of human nature ; for our spirits cannot be denied the ability of knowing truth, not only by discursive reflection, but also by immediate contemplation, and of loving the truth thus contemplated. Now, he who seeks to retain incessantly

before the eyes of his mind the Divine truth which has appeared in Christ, by means of this faculty of superior contemplation, and to receive a continual impression from it—such a one lives in the spirit. This is not unfrequently experienced by all believing Christians; but those moments, especially, in which they have decided in favour of faith, will have been moments of mystic contemplation; for their experience will convince them that at such seasons they received such a heart and spirit-penetrating certainty of Divine truth, as cannot be obtained by gradual and progressive reflection, but only by immediate enlightening. However, there are only a few Christians who pursue this spiritual direction in preference to the historical and philosophical; and it is also unnecessary that their number should considerably increase; since the historical presents equal security for the salvation of the soul, though the former may have the advantage in promoting its sanctification. It is only to be wished that every one would suffer himself to be led by the Divine hand whithersoever it pleases, and as far as it finds good.

Whilst in the historical bias the attachment to social life predominates, and people congregate together in larger or smaller associations, in spiritual dispositions there is often a preponderating inclination to solitude; and impelled by this, they gladly live

alone, and go about as if they were in a desert. They seek not men but God, whose presence they believe they feel more sensibly, and hear his voice more clearly, when peace and silence reigns in and around them. Thus, though they deprive themselves of that awakening feeling, which the pious Christian finds in intercourse with other pious people—yet if they are able perseveringly to continue their intercourse with the Lord, by contemplation, love, and prayer, they derive a great and peculiar blessing from it. This does not consist so much in high enthusiastic feelings, as in a tranquil, operative, incessantly emanating spiritual power, which diffuses itself within, and retains their mental powers and faculties in an unchanging freshness and bloom; so that it may be said of them, more than of others, that they have drunk of the fountain of eternal youth, or rather of the “well of water, which springeth up into everlasting life.”

They certainly require to exercise extreme solicitude, lest their inclination for solitude should degenerate into slothfulness, and a neglect of their social duties; and lest self-formed thoughts and ideas in the state of contemplation should be regarded by them as Divine truth. Many noble-minded individuals have fallen into this dangerous bye-path; and it can only be avoided by never entirely and exclusively pursuing



the spiritual direction, but frequently reverting to the historical and philosophical point of view, in order to try that which is wont to occupy the faculty of contemplation, by the standard of the Divine word and the laws of rational reflection.

A peaceful disposition towards others is usually connected with the tendency to a life in the Spirit, of which the historical is deficient. By the latter, those who do not belong to the church, nor to the smaller associations formed within it, are often treated in a very repulsive and hostile manner; even the philosophical divines, particularly if they incline to infidelity, do not always manifest that tolerance towards others which they claim for themselves. Those who follow the spiritual direction, have seldom given cause for such a reproach; and generally speaking, in their efforts, which are directed more to that which is within than to anything of an external nature, they show little desire for theological controversy; they are often more indifferent than is commendable, where they meet with the same essential contemplations and feelings. Although they are on terms of amity with those who follow the historical direction, yet they do not usually participate with them in the disinclination which the latter cherish towards the philosophical; on the contrary, they gladly avail themselves of whatever of an useful nature Philosophy offers them, and are

therefore fitted to act as mediators between the latter and the orthodox sticklers for the church.

But the greatest advantage of the spiritual bias lies in the powerful and inevitable influence which it exercises in exciting and promoting Christian piety. In this respect, the philosophical can be of little service in its scholastic refinement of ideas. The historical, in which, by the contemplation of the most sublime facts, the heart must necessarily be affected and filled with the most sacred feelings, is capable of more. But the influence of the spiritual bias is the most powerful with reference to this, because those sublime objects are to it not as something past, but something present, which it seeks to retain in constant contemplation. In this state, the supreme command, to love God above every other object, may be the most easily fulfilled; for when we behold him we love him, and when we love him we desire to behold him. We here also feel ourselves the most powerfully incited to pray—for prayer is the outpouring of love to God, even as confidential discourse is the effusion of human affection. Where there is a constant contemplation of God, and an unalterable love to him, prayer will flow forth in a similar proportion.

Considering the great advantages which are to be met with upon this path, it would, probably, be more frequently resorted to, if a mighty hindrance, which

is difficult to be overcome, did not restrain many, who were otherwise fitted for it. For in order to feel attracted by God and Divine things, in such a manner as to immerse ourselves, and live in the contemplation of them, we must have divested ourselves, in an uncommon manner, from the desire for what are termed innocent amusements. In order to put on that which is heavenly, earth must have lost its attractive power; the balloon, though inflated, does not ascend into the air, until the ropes which hold it are severed. Such an attachment to earthly things, as is still often met with in wise and pious individuals, obscures, in this instance, the sight of heaven, and like a heavy weight, draws down the ascending spirit. In order that the latter may not be restrained in its flight, even attention to earthly things must be confined within the limits of that which duty imperatively enjoins. An exception to this rule can only be made in the case of a few extremely highly talented individuals. But by means of such an unconsciousness of outward things, an appearance of abstraction results, which renders persons ridiculous, especially those who are obliged to move in the higher circles, and which scarcely any one is able to bear. The propensity to a contemplative life is therefore only very seldom cultivated, because the necessary intercourse with mankind raises too many obstructions to it, and because a complete withdraw-

ment into solitude is either not possible, or not even admissible.

My dear friend Strahl has, however, endeavoured to make it possible. From a more extensive field of labour he has withdrawn into this rural solitude, to which step, bodily indisposition may have also had some weight in deciding him. The duties of his office—such as preaching, instructing the young, and visiting the sick—are indefatigably fulfilled by him, though they cost him the greatest effort, in consequence of a weakness in the chest; he also devotes several hours every day to me. It is singular to hear him speak of the things of the world; he regards them as it were with a bird's-eye view—so far does he soar above them, and so diminutive do they appear to him; or rather he considers them with a heavenly indifference, in such a manner as a departed spirit may be supposed to regard and speak of them. He feels the want of nothing so much as of an entire and undisturbed solitude. Frequently it happens, that during conversation, uneasiness seizes him, he becomes thoughtful, monosyllabic, and retires into his chamber. On his re-appearance, he is more than commonly friendly, animated, and cheerful; and his whole being seems bedewed with a gracious influence, such as can only be obtained through prayer.

What is it detains me here so long? Besides the

friendship which I feel for Strahl, and which I have communicated to him, it is the wish to learn something more particular and complete respecting the mystic direction ; for it is sufficiently evident that he has entirely devoted himself to it. Those who are become proficient in the contemplative life, and in Divine love, are his dearest friends, and their writings constitute a great part of his library. Besides those which Steindorf mentioned to me, I have here become acquainted with many others ; I have also read several of their works ; but they did not altogether satisfy me. Even Strahl assures me, that he by no means approves of them all ; and that, generally speaking, he most decidedly condemns the inclination to regard human imaginations as Divine revelations. But that which he cannot refrain from valuing in them extremely, is the sincere and heroic will which beams forth from their life and writings, entirely to die to the world, and to live to Christ. That this constitutes the perfection of faith and a Christian life, who can deny ? But he that attempts it—and I have been doing so for some time—will also confess that it is difficult, very difficult !

POSTSCRIPT.—I cannot refrain from sending you a poem, which has been composed in this rural solitude. Not as if I attributed any great value to the thing itself ; but I rejoice in having been able to pro-



duce it. Composition is no easy work ; it requires a power of which I was deficient during my departure from God, and which seems now to have awoke in me, since I have returned to him. You are acquainted with Petrarch, whom Strahl also knows and loves ; I have therefore no need to tell you, what has been imitated from him, and what belongs to myself. The form is partially imitated\*—the substance entirely my own. I express what I have experienced, seen, and what I hope and converse upon not unfrequently with God. Poesy ought not to concern itself about anything else.

#### THE WAY TO HEAVEN.

Near a window I stood, at the dawning of day,  
And saw, whilst regarding the dense fog that lay  
All around on the ground, many a vision flit past ;  
Some with pleasure I viewed, and at some stood aghast.

The first that presented itself to my sight,  
Was a garden whose aspect the eye did delight,  
In which I beheld a rosy-faced child,  
Who, happy and joyful, in innocence smil'd.  
The breath of the morning play'd on his fair cheek,  
And gamboll'd amongst his ringlets so sleek.  
When lo ! the church bells pealed solemnly near,  
Whilst anthems devout fell soft on the ear,  
And the child knelt down on the grass for prayer.

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\* But has necessarily disappeared in the translation, in order to retain more faithfully the ideas of the Author.—*Note of the Translator.*



Instead of the child, a youth was now seen,  
With a nymph on each side of opposite mien,  
Proceeding across the flowery plain;  
The one on the left slily sought him to gain,  
And held up a mirror, in which he might view  
The pleasures of earth in colours untrue.  
The other, whose hands a crucifix bore,  
And stars on her head, for a coronet wore,  
Gravely and mildly enjoined him to turn  
To the glorious light which in heaven did burn;  
But in vain; for he seemed her counsel to spurn.

But now I beheld how thick darkness arose  
From a horrible pit, which a fire did disclose.  
The youth soon appeared, and with eagerness strove  
To grasp at a form which hovered above;  
In which I soon recognized her to the left;  
And as he turn'd towards the horrible cleft,  
As though of his senses by madness bereft,  
And his feet swept the brink of the dreadful abyss,  
The other fair form, from the regions of bliss,  
Was at hand to preserve him from dangers so dire,  
And from falling a prey to the unquenchable fire.

The cross of the Lord then erected I saw  
On a desolate waste where nothing did grow,  
And nature appeared to mourn all around;  
But the youth, immersed in sorrow profound,  
With tears often kissed the Saviour's feet,  
And mercy and pardon did sorely entreat.  
The Lord then freeing his arms from the wood,  
Extended them o'er him, whilst dropped the blood  
On the forehead and cheek of the youth as he stood;  
Who to newness of life was thus consecrated,  
And his powers to the service of Christ dedicated.

When lo! on a sudden came rushing along  
An army infernal, both numerous and strong,  
Intent to inflict on the youth some great harm,  
Who howe'er for the contest did rapidly arm.  
With helmet and shield, and a sword in his hand,  
He valiantly strove the foe to withstand.  
The battle was fearful, and heavy the blows  
He had to endure from his merciless foes.  
But he who equipped him so well for the fight  
Did also endue him with superior might;  
And all the foul fiends were put to the flight.

And when it had ended, the evening was come,  
In which the tired labourer longs for his home.  
Then helmet and cuirass were both laid aside,  
And earth in her lap a cool couch did provide,  
On which he peacefully took his repose;  
Whilst his slumbers to guard from disturbance and foes,  
An odorous curtain was over him thrown  
Of leaves and of flowers, both budding and blown,  
And the moon, from her sphere, look'd mournfully down

But see! the vision, which first rose to view,  
Returns, and the garden comes forward anew,  
Though glittering now celestially bright.  
Surrounded by the fair morning light,  
A blessed one stands there in glorious array,  
A diadem wearing, bright as the day.  
Whilst thousands of voices combine to sing,  
And heaven's high choirs their tribute bring  
Of praise unto him who death overcame—  
The blessed one, kneeling, in action the same,  
At the last as at first, gives thanks to his name.

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Now go, O song! and let each reader say,  
If this to heaven be not the proper way?

## LETTER XXXVIII.

THE Divine Hand which guides me has once more deeply reached my heart, by events which have shaken me to the very centre. By what has now occurred before my eyes, it has put the seal upon all that I have experienced during my residence in Germany. When I entered this quiet village, I was far from anticipating what I should here live to see. In order, however, to retain every particular in my memory, I immediately wrote it down at full length, and feel impelled to communicate at least extracts of it to you.

On the morning of the 20th of July, I had entered the room, where we were accustomed to breakfast together, at the usual time. Not meeting with my friend there, and as he did not appear after I had long waited for him, I felt uneasy, and went to his door, which I carefully opened. He sat at his table, writing diligently. On hearing me enter, he looked around, nodded at me in a friendly manner, and said, "God bless you, my friend! step in, and excuse me only for a moment longer." He continued writing, then rose up, presented me with a slip of paper, and

said, "Do you wish to know what I have been writing? There, read it!" I read the following lines:—

Upon these waters I have floated long,  
Assail'd by tempests and by currents strong;  
Now to the port of rest at length I steer,  
And gladly see the end of my career.

The evening's glow has vanished from the sky,  
And the cool winds begin to murmur nigh.  
No more shall I fulfil my duties here,  
But be admitted to a higher sphere.

Swan-like, in my last hour I'll sing,  
And to His name my humble tribute bring,  
From whom my soul its endless life receives,  
In whom my heart so stedfastly believes.

Then shall I soar to brighter worlds on high,  
Where saints and angels 'Holy! holy!' cry;  
And lost in love and wonder humbly bow  
Before His throne, who stooped for me so low.

Through endless years I'll gaze upon his face,  
And sink entranced in his Divine embrace;  
Imbibing life from him, until I be  
Th' abode and likeness of the Deity.

I gave him back the paper, and said, whilst regarding him with a look of astonishment, "You are a poet!"

"Not exactly so," replied he; "but we are the subjects of poetical feelings in age as well as in youth."

"And is what you here express," continued I, "a presentiment, a foreboding?"

“ I would not say that,” answered he ; “ but ought not an aged man, who is at the same time an invalid, and who has a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better, to prepare himself for it every day ? I certainly feel ill to-day. I shall therefore continue some time longer in my room ; at noon, if it be the will of God, we shall see each other again.”

On this, he reached me his hand with a friendly look. I left him, and spent the hours till noon in my apartment, in solitary occupation. The air was sultry and oppressive, and induced the expectation that it would not pass over without a storm.

When Strahl appeared at the dinner-table, he seemed deeply affected, though free from pain. He implored a benediction upon our meal, and thanked God for his temporal and spiritual blessings with deep emotion. Each of us felt a degree of abstraction, and our conversation was more than once interrupted by long pauses.

Dinner was just over, when we perceived that the room suddenly became dark. We approached the window, and saw a dreadful black thunder-cloud immediately above our heads. Like a powerful army, which after concentrating itself into a small space suddenly shews its weapons, extends itself on all sides, covers the spacious field of battle, and thunders forth its heavy ordnance ; so the cloud had spread itself in

a moment over the whole sky ; flash followed upon flash, and the thunder roared simultaneously with the lightning, no longer in separate intonations but forming one continued roll. The rain fell in torrents, and overflowed the little garden before the house, in which only the flowers and the tips of the grass appeared above the water. A flash of lightning more vivid than the rest, accompanied by a tremendous clap of thunder, darted down into the earth at a short distance from us. Carried away by our feelings, we exclaimed to each other, with an animation which beamed forth from Strahl's eyes, and communicated itself to me, "Thou makest clouds thy chariot ; thou fliest on the wings of the wind." "Who makest winds thy messengers, and flames of fire thy servants." "He bowed the heavens, and came down, and darkness was under his feet. He rode upon a cherub and did fly, yea he did fly on the wings of the wind." "At the brightness that was before him, the thick clouds divided, with hailstones and flashes of lightning." "Oh for a chariot and horses of fire," exclaimed Strahl, "and then to ascend in a tempest to heaven!" "But your mantle," exclaimed I, "you must leave to me."

The storm had passed over ; the rain had ceased. We opened the windows, and suffered the cooled air to flow in. But this did not satisfy us ; we wished



to breathe it out of the house. We proceeded without difficulty from the parsonage towards the church, because the rain had already run off from those places, which lay a little elevated. The inhabitants of the village stood at the doors of their houses, and the children were already playing in the street. On arriving at the churchyard, we saw two men through the door, which was standing open, who had just begun to dig a grave to the left near the wall, under the elder bushes. This circumstance seemed to strike Strahl; he went towards them, and inquired for whom they were digging the grave?

The men stuck their spades into the ground, and said, looking up at him, after a friendly salutation, "For Dorothy, to whom Anthony was to have been married, and who is to be buried to-morrow."

"But who has pointed out this place to you?" continued he; "I have fixed upon it for my own grave."

"Your reverence must ask the sexton," replied the men, "for it was he who pointed it out to us."

The sexton was called. "How can you permit a grave to be made here?" said Strahl to him; "have I not often told you, that I wish to be buried on this spot!"

"Has your Reverence really said so?" answered the sexton, "my memory is weak, I have no particular recollection of it. But why does your Reverence

wish to be buried under the elder bushes? You would rest in a much more stately manner under the great linden tree. Besides, elder is a worthless sort of a bush, it ought to be rooted up.

Strahl could not forbear smiling at the visible embarrassment of the man.

Meanwhile Anthony entered the church-yard. Strahl went to meet him, took him by the hand, and said, "Was it your wish, Anthony, that your dear Dorothy should be buried under the elder?"

"Yes, it is my wish," replied Anthony; "and the sexton, to whom I applied respecting it, after some hesitation agreed to it."

"Do you attach any particular value to this place?" asked Strahl.

"Certainly, sir," replied Anthony; "for it was here that Dorothy gave me her consent. It was on a Sunday morning; and we had both been to church. You had preached very beautifully on the great love which the Lord bears towards us, his nearness to us, and how willing he is to guide and direct us, both in great things and small, if we only call upon him to do so. I then thought to myself, 'I have long felt a cordial affection for Dorothy, and would gladly take her to be my wife; I will therefore commit the matter to the Lord, and watch whether he gives me any intimation to do so. I then prayed very fervently to the Lord, and

after I had finished, my heart became so tranquil, that the whole affair seemed to me already settled. When I left the church, the congregation had already dispersed, with the exception of Dorothy, who was standing under the elder-tree, which was just then in flower ; she was plucking a few bunches of it, when I approached her, and said, "Dorothy, I love you sincerely, and wish that you would become my wife. I have prayed to the Lord in the church, and I now feel so comfortable, that I cannot but think that it is His will. I therefore now ask you, if you are also willing ? She let go the elder branch which she had hitherto held in her right hand, put it into mine, and kindly nodded assent. We then went to our parents, and received their blessing."

This tale was told by the young man with many tears, during which he frequently wiped his eyes with a red silk handkerchief—probably a present from his betrothed—in a corner of which a faded nosegay was tied. Strahl and I wept with him, and even the gravediggers seemed affected.

"Dear Anthony," said Strahl, after a considerable pause, "I would gladly concede this place to you which I have destined for myself. But you certainly wish to be at length interred near your Dorothy, and you see that is impossible here ; because there are graves on

each side, between which there is room for only one grave more."

"Certainly," said Anthony; "she must not then be buried here. Make the grave where you please," said he, addressing the grave-diggers, "only leave as much room as to suffer me to repose beside her;" and then went away sobbing.

"Shall we fill up the grave we have begun to dig, sir?" asked the grave-diggers.

"Leave it open till to-morrow," replied Strahl; "you shall then hear further."

I silently accompanied him back to the house. On our arrival there, he took me by the hand, and said, "It cannot be denied, that I am very impressively reminded of my end to-day. I have seen how my own grave was being dug. I am alone in the world, childless, and without relatives. You are a younger friend; you are become a son to me. I wish to communicate the experience of my life to you, in the hope that it may be useful to you; I wish to do it soon, in order to be able to do it at all. I now require some hours for recollection and prayer. But if you are desirous of listening to my legacy, you will find me under the elms, when it is evening.

## LETTER XXXIX.

I REPAIRED in the evening to the spot pointed out. The sun, about to set, again drew around it a dark mass of clouds. The air was still sultry and oppressive. An ominous and melancholy calm extended itself over the whole district. It was not long before Strahl appeared ; his gait and his motions betrayed a debility and weakness, which terrified me. He placed himself opposite me, and after drawing his breath deeply a few times, he thus began :—

“ I have just been holding much converse with God, concerning my sins and imperfections ; and his grace has powerfully strengthened my faith in my Saviour. I wish to speak with you, my dear young friend, respecting the efforts which I have continued to make for a series of years, and which have for their object the dying to the world and the living to Christ. There is no other aim for a true disciple of Jesus ; nor ought you, who are also one of his disciples, to have any other. It is true, you will not be conducted upon the same path. We may die to the world and ourselves, as well actively as passively, and in the midst of social connections, as well as in solitude. The experience

however of another, though upon a different path, may be serviceable to you."

"But not at present," exclaimed I, rising from my seat. "Another time! Speaking costs you at present too great an effort; you will not be able to bear it."

He beckoned to me in a friendly manner to resume my seat, and said, "If it be the Lord's will that I should speak, as it appears to me to be the case, he will also give me strength to do so." He then continued as follows:—

"I did not attain to faith by means of a sudden and agitating transition, as in your case. It sprang up in me, in my earliest years, and I cannot remember any period in which I have been unfaithful to it. Though its manifestations were extremely weak during the period of childhood and youth, yet it was never really shaken or injured. I even preserved it at the university, where so many lose it, who bring it from home with them. Under the Divine guidance, every circumstance turned out favourably for me; a congregation in the country wished to have me for their pastor, whilst I was still very young. From this situation, I was called away to the principal church in the metropolis. I cherished a wish to enter into the marriage state, which terminated, however, in a dis-



appointment ; and the dreadful pain it occasioned me, ever after prevented the desire for matrimonial happiness from rising in my heart.

“A Protestant clergyman is exposed, in this country, to many temptations, to earthly mindedness, and a worldly mode of life. At least, such was the case with me ; I know not whether the fault lay more in the circumstances in which I was placed, or in my own weakness. The esteem which is shown to the Catholic clergyman, merely on account of his office, must be personally acquired by the Protestants. Above all things, it is requisite that he be a good orator ; and this is no easy matter. It is difficult to exercise one's self in every thing needful to render one a good rhetorician ; who is able to do it, who likes to do it, who has sufficient leisure for it ? It is more easy to please and make an impression ; and if this be our chief object, we have certainly taken a very ungodly direction. If we succeed, we are in danger of growing proud ; if not, our fraternal affection towards those who are more successful is put to a severe test.

“The Protestant clergyman, in order to gain esteem, is further in need of learning. I honour it, only I should not like that it should ever be made subservient to this object ; and least of all by a clergyman. Yet it is necessary for him to have sent some essays to a theological periodical, and he must

at least have published a volume of sermons. The question then is, what have the reviewers said of his labours. He reads many of the periodicals of the day—to read all would be impossible. He there finds himself abused: a friend draws his attention to an unfavourable judgment, which perhaps would otherwise have happily escaped him; and now the peace of his mind is for a long time disturbed.

“The Protestant clergyman is particularly looked up to, when he is at the same time a member of an ecclesiastical court, and possesses an influence on the affairs of the church, not only by serving and obeying, but also by ordering and superintending. How easily, in such a situation, is he torn away by the multiplicity of external cares and affairs, from that collectedness of mind which is so needful to him! And supposing, that to the ambition of the orator and the man of learning, that of a man of business were superadded? Suppose him powerfully impelled by the desire of wearing on his breast the visible sign of his merits and their acknowledgment? Would not the striving for the heavenly crown be paralyzed by the longing after the temporary honours, with which the mighty of the earth adorn themselves?

“The clergyman is intended to be a pastor, and his vocation is the care of souls. It is wrong to maintain, that in Protestant congregations there are

fewer opportunities of exercising this office ; I know from experience that they are very frequent. But it cannot be denied, that the majority of his flock lay less claim to his pastoral care for their souls, than to his social gifts, when they esteem him. They make him a friend of the family, and the companion of their festivities. And as there is nothing in the present day which is not conversed upon in polished circles, the man must also know everything, to be able to pass a well-matured opinion on every subject. Such a situation is certainly critical, and unless the individual is much upon his guard, leads to a great removal from God.

“I had only yielded too much to these temptations, and had consequently fallen into a lamentable condition. My heart was torn asunder, and in its recesses a gloomy sadness dwelt. Who has ever found happiness in the world ; and how should I find it there, who was conscious, and taught my hearers from my own conviction, that it was only to be found in God ? I was anxious that the Lord should at length take possession of my whole heart ; but this did not ensue, perhaps because I thought only of the rest I thereby hoped to attain, and not of my duty and the honour of God. How I envied a Paul and an Augustine, whose hearts were entirely changed at the moment of their conversion ! How I was grieved at myself, that the

world, although I believed in the Lord as they did, should yet have so much hold upon me, and still be able to torment me so dreadfully !

“ Sometimes however it seemed to me,<sup>r</sup> that we must beware of carrying self denial to excess ; and I was zealous against those, who, in my opinion, went too far in this respect. On one occasion, I accidentally opened Fenelon’s Principles of Spiritual Life, having bought the book at a sale, on account of its rarity ; and whilst reading respecting love to God, that it might still retain a mixture of self-love, although it ought to be entirely purified from it, I felt something not only of repugnance, but even of disgust. Similar feelings possessed me on reading some of the chapters in the ‘ Imitation of Christ.’ But assertions of the nature just mentioned, left a sting behind in my heart, and I was compelled, in some measure by my disgust, always to take up the book again, which I had thrown aside. But of what avail was it to oppose human authority to such a doctrine ? The words of Scripture were sufficiently clear, “ that we must forsake all to follow Christ.’ I sought in vain to conceal from myself the mighty extent of this requirement, and began gradually to prepare for its fulfilment.

“ Whilst I devoted myself with more ardour than ever to my pastoral duties, I retired by degrees from every connection which had no reference to them ;

and as no wish was so easily granted to such an inconsiderable person as myself, as that of being left alone, I soon found myself in a lonely situation. I prolonged the time which I devoted to prayer before God; and endeavoured besides, as far as each occupation permitted, to set him continually before me. My object was to establish the Lord in the place of self, to sink into which I was but too much inclined. I did not permit myself to think of myself any further than the regulation of my affairs made it indispensable. I bestowed, it is true, much labour on my public discourses before they were preached; but afterwards, I repelled every remembrance of them; I did not even permit myself to be dissatisfied with them, because much vanity may lie in so doing.

“I should, however, have accomplished little by these means, if the Lord, whom I invoked, had not come to my assistance. One night, when it was already late, I had been considering, with particular seriousness, the Lord’s command to forsake everything and follow him; and deeply affected by the consciousness of the total absence of strength for that purpose, I broke out into the following prayer:—‘Lord, thou desirest the possession of my heart, and I desire to give it thee; but do thou tear it away from myself and the world, for I am unable to give it thee!’ Since that time, the Lord seemed to take up the matter himself,



in order to fulfil my request in a more comprehensive manner than I had intended. His dealings with me were severe and painful, as they are always wont to be in such cases; as you also, my dear young friend, have still to expect in the seasons of purification which await you.

“ The success of my ministerial labours afforded me particular satisfaction. This pleasure seemed to me perfectly harmless—nay, it appeared to mingle together with my love to the Lord, for whose glory I laboured; and yet self-love had in this perhaps its most dangerous seat. I was attacked upon this very point. The blessing which had previously accompanied my labours, vanished at least from my perceptions. The progress of the kingdom of God stagnated in my vicinity; whatever I said or undertook, was attended with no result; and whilst the common-place language of worldly wisdom, uttered by others, produced the most salutary effects, the most powerful motives of the Christian faith, as soon as I urged them, remained fruitless. I felt I was nothing; that my powers and even my faith might continue useless; and that God, by another in my place, as soon as he granted him his blessing, could accomplish more than by my means. This was a dreadfully humiliating discovery.

“ I began also to suffer from bodily indisposition.



There are diseases, which, though they often terminate fatally, are not unfrequently followed by a rapid and entire restoration of the mental and bodily powers. There are other diseases, of which we die, not only once, but daily; which gradually destroy the strength, even as the ivy winds itself so closely about the tree, until at length the latter is destroyed by it; and which, by the connection between body and soul, extend their painful influence also to the latter. Mine was of this nature. Every breath I drew, and every step I took, caused me pain; and my thoughts burst forth only wearisomely from the darkness in which my mind was enveloped. In this state, I was also visited by painful inward temptations. You have experienced something similar previous to your conversion; but, believe what I say, it may perhaps be serviceable to you in future; even a penitent and believing heart may be tried, by Divine permission, by this torture. Horrible images stood before my eyes; dreadful thoughts crossed my mind; and a terrible agitation raged within. These attacks were the most severe, just at those times when the believing mind thought it might promise itself the most refreshment. They began at Christmas, and reached their height at Easter. Oh! by what fearful horrors have I been frequently tormented at this glorious festival, where nothing but joy and gladness pervade the whole

Christian world ! Scarcely ever was I able to rejoice at the return of Spring, in consequence of the great and inward pain I experienced. In a little poem, I once expressed myself on this subject as follows :

Now Spring appears, and in her joyful train,  
A thousand pleasures dance upon the plain ;  
Hill, wood, and dale with varied beauty vie,  
The heart to gladden, and to charm the eye.

No more by such a pleasing scene I'm cheer'd ;  
For many blossoms once in me appear'd.  
But now what blooms, but anguish of the mind ?  
What flourishes, but pain and grief combin'd ?

And be it so ; for soon shall fade away  
The blossoms which now open to the day.  
They fall, decaying, ne'er to rise again,  
And vanish, when the wind sweeps o'er the plain.

But that fair bloom which inwardly expands  
And flourishes, bedewed by gracious hands,  
Shall fruit produce in a superior sphere,  
When all below shall fade and disappear.

“ These fruits they also really yielded even here below. Such temptations as these may lead to insanity, if anxiously and violently struggled against. From the writings which treat of the inward life, I had learnt a better remedy for them, the application of which, by Divine grace, did not prove unsuccessful. I gently and quietly resigned myself to these torments, whilst saying to the Lord, ‘ If it be thy will, that I

am tormented, it shall be my will also.' I quietly turned away my eyes from the horrible imagery that presented itself to them, whilst seeking to acquire a sight of the crucified Saviour, and retain the contemplation. Certainly, this did not consist of a conscious series of ideas and feelings, but in an almost unconscious inward cry, which was directed to the Lord, by which means, however, the firmest bonds were formed with him. When my distress was very great, I have frequently been able to retain him present with me for whole days together without interruption ; I did not succeed in doing so, in seasons of repose ; and hence I soon ceased to be afraid of that state—nay I was compelled to love it, because I felt that I was so powerfully torn away by it from connection with the world, and driven to the Lord.

“The more I inwardly experienced the necessity of forsaking all for Christ’s sake, the more I began to insist upon it in my public discourses. The deeply affected state of my mind could not be entirely concealed on these occasions ; and manifested itself in a greater degree than I was aware or desired, in the selection and treatment of the subjects of my sermons, and in the language and expressions I employed. If previously I had striven with almost too much anxiety to express myself with perspicuity and in a connected manner, I now often let myself be carried

away by my feelings, without inquiring whither they would lead me. Those who attended my church, observed this alteration, but without expressing themselves unfavourably respecting it. People are always attracted by an unwonted manifestation of feeling, even though it seems to them as if it proceeded from something of a morbid nature ; nor are they alarmed, if, in the exposition of the word of God, its severe requirements are urged ; for they are, alas ! accustomed to abate the half of them before-hand. But the attention of the office-bearers of the church was drawn to it ; they found that my discourses had taken what they called a mystic tendency ; the only question was, whether that which was thus termed, did not, in this case, coincide with what was purely scriptural and spiritual.

“The elders of the church being much prejudiced against anything of such a nature, but unwilling to take any other than lenient measures, a retirement into a state of quiescence was proposed to me on favourable and honourable conditions, in consideration of my age and indisposition. Perhaps I ought to have rejected this proposal, the object of which did not escape me, and have continued in my situation till the end. But I was of opinion, whether correctly or incorrectly, that if I removed from the connections in which I had hitherto lived, the accomplishment of

my purpose to die to the world in order to live to Christ, would prove the less difficult. I therefore accepted the offer with joy ; on the condition, however, that I should not be placed in a state of inactivity, but in a more limited sphere of labour. This living was vacant ; I obtained it ; I was quickly settled here, and my place in the metropolis was as quickly occupied by an able successor.

“O my friend, who is able to fathom his own heart? Whilst I imagined I was exercising nothing but humility and self-denial, I cherished thoughts of self-love and vanity. I imagined I had excited an eternal memorial to myself in the recollections of the members of my congregation ; and with the pain I felt at leaving them, I comforted myself with the hope that they would not part from me without similar emotions. I was mistaken and undeceived. The manner in which the latter was effected, proved to be the severest, but at the same time the most salutary of the remedies which the Lord in his mercy ever applied to me. In order to regulate some affairs, I was obliged to leave my present residence for a short time, and travel to the metropolis. I wished also to hear my successor preach, and had made my arrangements accordingly. On my entering the church, I found it already filled ; there was no longer any room left, either in the pews or the aisles ; and it was with



difficulty that I found a place where I could stand, close to the furthest wall. The sermon deserved the highest commendation ; its genuine scriptural doctrine, founded on experience and the word of God, was developed with perspicuity, power, energy, and originality ; and enforced by a singular eloquence, which, without any attempt to recommend itself, served only to set off Divine truth, and deepen its impression. I felt most profoundly pleased and edified ; and though compelled to admit that I was greatly excelled by my successor, yet I reflected upon the good will, and the fidelity which I had manifested for many years together, with reference to my congregation, and did not doubt but that they would even on that occasion, have gladly seen me in my place again.

“ When Divine worship was ended, it had begun to rain a little, which caused a delay in the departure of the hearers. The crowd had carried me along with it as far as the pillar on which the porch rests ; on the other side of the pillar stood three persons, two men and a woman, who could not see me, but whose voices I recognised ; they were members of my church, to whom I was much attached, and who in other respects were closely connected with me. ‘ What a large congregation ! ’ said the female. ‘ Such an auditory,’ said one of the men, ‘ our old preacher never had.’ ‘ He was in fact weak both in body and mind,



observed the other. 'They even say,' added the first, 'that his religious principles were not the most correct.' 'Ah,' exclaimed the woman, 'I should not have thought that!' 'Yes,' said the man, 'I read it only lately in a journal; he was there accused of gross errors, even in the most important doctrines.' 'Where is he at present?' inquired the woman. 'In the country,' replied one of the men. 'No,' said the other, 'it is reported that he is dead.' 'Dead?' rejoined the woman; 'is he really!'

"This conversation, which I was compelled to hear against my will, deeply wounded and mortified me. The rain was over, the multitude flowed out and dispersed. I stood before my church, and amongst my people, as in a desert. I still longed for human consolation, although what I had just experienced, ought to have divested me of this weakness. Not far from the church dwelt a rich merchant, with whose family I had stood, in my ministerial capacity, in the closest connection. The lady, who had formerly been my diligent hearer, was easily excited by pious feelings, and not incapable of Christian enthusiasm. Her eldest daughter had been confirmed by me only a short time before. I resolved to repair thither, in the hope, though I could not make it obvious to myself, that they would manifest a pleasure in seeing me again, and a regret at my removal. I must also

confess to you another of my weaknesses : I have always been very loath to dine alone, and I hoped that I should be invited to dinner.

“ The house door was open ; the carriage stood under the gateway ; I squeezed my slender form with difficulty past the gigantic black horses, and ascended the steps. The lady of the house was just hastening down stairs with her cloak flying behind her, but on seeing me, stopped before me, and without any salutation, or waiting for any explanation with respect to my appearing there, exclaimed, ‘ Have you heard the sermon this morning ? What do you say to it ? ’ ‘ I think it very excellent,’ answered I. ‘ Oh it was a precious sermon, a heavenly sermon, a Divine sermon ! ’ exclaimed the lady, ‘ I must go to the dear man, and express the deep-felt gratitude of my heart. No, such a sermon as that I never heard before.’ With these words she rushed down the steps, and into the carriage, followed by her daughter, who hastened past me, with a polite inclination of the head, and seated herself beside her. The carriage rolled away ; I also went out of the gateway, and had almost been crushed between the gates by the porter, who paid as little attention to me as his mistress had done.

“ I therefore returned to my inn, where I took my scanty meal alone. In the afternoon, the weather had become very fine. A countless multitude on foot, on

horseback, and in carriages, crowded through the gate, near which the inn was situate, into the country. Amidst the noise which they occasioned, and which greatly disturbed me, I sat at the window, supporting my head with my hand, and struggling with the painful consciousness of having so suddenly lost all consideration in the eyes of those to whom I had lately stood in such a manifold important connection. ‘Vain heart!’ exclaimed I at length, ‘thou hast been seeking for years together to tear thyself away from the world, and now, when the indifference of mankind favours this effort, thou despondest. Love these people as before, and even more than before—thou art not dependent upon them; but cease to desire love and esteem from them; for this alone renders thee their slave. They suppose thou hast been of no use to them; bear it; nay, confess that they are in the right; confess that thou hast really been of no service to them. Part from them in the entire feeling of thy nothingness, for in this alone canst thou find liberty!’

“Thus I struggled for hours together; I endeavoured to burst the bond which held me fast, and by God’s grace I at length succeeded. Oh could I describe to you the peace which then pervaded my heart, and how happy and blissful I felt! Even the intolerable noise in the street, which continued till late in the

evening, sounded tranquillizingly in my ear, nor did it banish sleep, which encircled me with its beneficial influence.

“Thus does a dying man lie upon some rock in the boundless ocean, upon which the waves have cast him, after suffering shipwreck. Whilst he still hoped that some vessel would approach, and take him on board ; whilst the idea of his house hovered before him, where his wife and children were awaiting him in the well-known apartment—the ceaseless rolling of the waves around him seemed dreadfully spectral to him, and their thundering noise sounded horribly in his ear. But he has now given up the hope that any vessel will approach ; and should one come, it would find him a wasted corpse. Before his breaking eye the image of his house, his wife, and his children disappear ; angels, who hover invisibly past him and touch his forehead with their branches of palm, open out to him a prospect of the eternal mansions. The breaking of the waves then presents itself to him like the gambols of children, and their roar has subsided into a cradle-song, during which he gently falls asleep.”

## LETTER XL.

“THE next morning,” continued Strahl, “I awoke with an indescribably happy feeling. I took my seat in the carriage, in order to return hither. The joyful emotion of my heart was so great, that I traversed large portions of the way on foot, with all the energy of youth—nay, I might almost say, exulting and leaping. ‘O my God!’ I exclaimed, ‘O my Redeemer! my heart has been so long divided between the world and thee! I will now love thee alone, and live to thee alone! At length, at length; it is now high time. Graciously enable me, before I die, to spend at least one day entirely according to thy will!’

“After my return hither, I continued my poor labours, with the resolution, if possible, to divest myself of every thought of myself in them. In this, I confess I was much favoured by circumstances. Was it to be expected that the good people here would praise my oratory? Could I hope that they, in whose service I devote the weak remains of my powers, would love me and think of me, when others, to whom I had dedicated the flower of my years, forgot me so rapidly? When I address them, their presence often vanishes entirely from my view, and the feeling of the presence of God,

who commands me to speak, fills my whole soul. Oh if I could always have preached in such a manner ! When I wish, as is certainly the case, that my labours amongst them may not continue fruitless, I am careful that self-seeking, after having given up the wish to be applauded, does not seek compensation by the prospect of success. Why should *my* labours succeed, since so many others, who are better than I, have been unsuccessful ? Why should I regard myself as an instrument of which God must necessarily make use ? In order to love him, we must be like a ball, which rolls according to the inclination of the plane, on which his hand has placed it, but which does not trouble itself whether anything is accomplished by it or not.

“A wish also, which I had always cherished, was now at least brought nearer its fulfilment—that of being able to pray. Do not misunderstand me, my dear friend ! I have prayed from my childhood up ; but there is such a great difference in the several kinds of prayer. Prayer is the converse of love with the ever-present God ; how defectively must he pray, who loves God only a little, and to whom he is seldom present ! Formerly the consciousness of his presence was so often withdrawn from me, by the disturbance of a city life, by the rapid revolution of urgent occupations, or rather—to confess the truth—by self, which



took possession of my consciousness in his place. I had read much upon converse with God, and had myself experienced something of it; I had also preached upon it not unfrequently; but I had not yet attained to that intercourse, which, though more difficult in my previous situation, was not impracticable. I may now assert with truth, that I spend many days in his presence without intermission. As soon as the sun arises yonder, behind my church, he stands before me, more beautiful and glorious than that bright luminary; he accompanies me, until it disappears in the evening behind the river and the hills; nor does he leave me, even during the night. Every position which my soul occupies with reference to him, is a prayer; and these positions are certainly various in their kind.

“If there be no feeling in my heart that desires to be poured out before him, I have recourse to some object of reflection, as offered me either by Scripture, the testimonies of pious men, or the activity of my own mind. I collect my powers to the consideration of this object; I let my thoughts develope themselves upon it; I follow them in the various directions they take; I enter into a variety of investigations; I write, I read, but in such a manner, that during these employments I repeatedly look up to the Lord, and place every thing in connection with him and with his glory. Frequently this constitutes my sole occupation; and I

am then also satisfied with it, and regard it as a good prayer, and acceptable to God.

“ But the materials, the fervour, and the ecstasy, often accumulate to such a degree as to repel every occupation; and then the impulse alone is felt to cleave closely to the Lord, and to impart myself to him. This inclination must be speedily followed, before it passes away; nor can we easily do anything better, unless it were the fulfilment of some charitable duty towards our neighbour. At the commencement of this effusion of the soul, thoughts and feelings at first attach themselves to each other in a certain order, whilst passing from the mourning over our daily inward and outward distress, to thankfulness for the deliverance already received, and from the confession of sin to the praise of the righteousness purchased for us by the atonement of Christ. But the Spirit which prays within us, soon lays aside the natural order, according to which our faculties operate, for the purpose of connecting our ideas with the superior laws which he himself imparts. We are then wonderfully borne from earth to heaven, and to the vision of blessedness; from thence back to earth, to our misery and our sins; from pain to joy, and from pleasure to pain; from the present back into the past, and forward into the future, and from ourselves to that which lies at the greatest distance from us.

This state never lasted very long with me. When it is over, I very gladly return to those inferior employments with which I had commenced, in order to fill my spirit anew, and prepare it for higher emotions.

“ In prayer also, I am occasionally placed in a state of extreme simplicity, in which all consciousness of progress in thinking and feeling ceases. Then it seems to me, as if the whole world sank around me, and as if I were enveloped in thick darkness. But in this obscurity, a light kindles, which shines more and more brightly, and to which I then turn my eyes. This light is sometimes formless infinity; but it is equally as often the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ in its celestial glorification, or else in its painful humiliation on earth. Although the latter can only be viewed under distinct forms, yet it is entirely equal in dignity with the formless infinity I have just mentioned; nay, there is probably no spiritual vision superior to that of the Lord on the cross. In this state, I think indeed, but not in the usual manner; and though I feel, yet it is not in the customary way. The faculties we require for the business of the present life, appear to repose, and another faculty seems to operate, which is destined for the circumstances of a superior life. It is distinguished from the rest by this, that the former divide and dissolve everything.

in order to combine them again ; whilst the latter beholds everything in a lucid view, without dissolution, separation, or succession. What is then felt is neither delight nor rapture, nor can be described by any expressions which are borrowed from impressions of the senses. It might be said, that the individual has found a rest, which is the entrance into the rest of God. It is only seldom that I have attained in prayer to this superior rest ; it is a pure gift of God's free grace, which no one ought to desire, no one arbitrarily strive after, and of which no one who receives it dare boast.

“ With the exception perhaps of what I have just told you, you will hear nothing new from me, or what you do not already know. On the whole, none of those who have taken the same direction as myself, ever boasted of being in possession of superior and more unwonted mysteries. Our great mystery, which in other respects is sufficiently obvious to every one, and which is displayed on every page of Scripture, is, that in order to love God, the world and self must be denied without sparing. We know nothing—I, at least, know nothing, and am determined to know nothing—but what the Scriptures teach in a clear and obvious manner. Were an angel to come for the purpose of bringing me new revelations, I would say to him, ‘ Do not now disturb me ; for

how am I to know whether thou hast emanated from the light or the darkness ?' I would not even once have mentioned this elevated state of prayer, if Paul, whilst assuring us that he had been caught up into the third heaven, had not testified that it is only a good spirit which translates us into similar states.

"A constant elevation of mind and feeling is said to be connected with the contemplative life; at least this is asserted by those who are strangers to this life; and they are wont to accuse us, who strive to lead it, of a self-seeking effort after unusual spiritual sweetnesses. I have occasionally experienced such transports. Yes, I must confess that my heart has sometimes been so full of superabundant joy, that I have been compelled unceasingly to exclaim, 'Lord, for what more shall I ask thee? Thou hast already given me all! Thou hast never left any of my requests unanswered!' But I have never been able fully to rejoice in this joy, because it remains uncertain whether it is of earthly or heavenly origin, since it is certainly never very favourable to humility. I have also very seldom enjoyed it. My customary frame is that of an abstract peace, which is often exchanged for profound sorrow. Now I should be glad to know what particular enjoyment self-seeking can find in this? But I willingly endure the greatest barrenness and contrition of spirit, as soon as I am

conscious of not having brought them upon me, by removing from the Lord. I am then perfectly satisfied with this frame of mind which he sends me, and which cannot be therefore any other than good. Regarding these changes in the inward state, I once expressed myself in the following lines :—

Oft into the heart descends  
A heaven of purity and joy ;  
Then the spirit upwards tends,  
As soars the eagle to the sky ;  
And the soul, by God caress'd,  
Tastes the raptures of the blest.

Then again, a grief profound  
Involves the heart in shades of night ;  
And the spirit looks around  
Upon itself with shame and fright ;  
Longing still the bliss to taste,  
Which it daily once possess'd.

From the higher spheres of light,  
Where grace alone the sceptre bears,  
Which to fit us for the sight,  
By turns delights and causes tears—  
Comes—which no one can explain—  
Both this pleasure and this pain.

Both these streams of joy and woe  
Already through this heart have flow'd,  
Which in true devotion's glow,  
At times arose towards Heaven and God ;



Or in darkness sank again,  
Bleeding in mysterious pain.

Which is better then, to be  
In suffering or in ecstasy?  
Dearest Lord, for whom I pine,  
If only thou continue mine,  
Come what will, I'll ne'er complain,  
Be it pleasure—be it pain.

I have thought, my dear young friend, that you would not slight the words of an old man who loves you, and would gladly be of service to you; I have therefore spoken to you with a prolixity which my years must excuse, and I have been unwilling to delay making this communication, because the time of your departure is near, and that of my dissolution perhaps still nearer. You are yet young, and, if the Lord permit, will still sojourn a long time here below. Having become reconciled with God, you will also find the world reconcilable, with which you had quarrelled; and if my presentiment does not deceive me, you will find all your expectations, with regard to the future, exceeded by the favour of the Lord. Upon whatever career you may enter—whether that of an active life, or of learning and science—I beseech you, do not delay as long as I delayed, bringing the Lord the sacrifice of your whole heart. Do not fall into the delusion of so many pious men, who serve

him, in order by so doing to derive the greater advantage from the world. Think of this evening hour, in which I testify to you, that he who desires to love God, must love him with an entirely pure and disinterested love. Let us mutually love each other in him. He is omnipresent and everywhere ; wherever we may be, we shall be united in him.

“ Affection for you, my dear young friend, has afforded me strength to say thus much. They are the words of one about to depart. I have uttered them as one whom the opened sepulchre already awaits. The bonds which fettered me to earth are dissolved ; for I desire nothing more from it, and hence it is easy for me to leave it. I do not indeed impetuously long to be absent from it. Why should I not gladly linger here, where the Lord cherishes me so kindly, and daily grants me to walk by his side ? It is beautiful here ; but there it is still more so. Oh what radiance shines from yonder heavens ! What a ray of joy does the eternal sun cast into my heart ! Never to sin any more—never to pollute myself by any impure thought—ever to burn in the purest love—to live entirely in him—to lose myself wholly in the contemplation of his glory—this attracts me powerfully—he will pardon me, if I exclaim, ‘ Come, O Lord ! yea come quickly, Lord Jesus ! ’ ”

Strahl had uttered these last words with a visible

effort, a faltering voice, and increasingly long pauses for the purpose of taking breath. When he had ended, he breathed once more, slowly and deeply, and, as it seemed, without difficulty ; he then reclined his head upon his breast. The sun was already set, and another rising storm clothed the heavens with blackness. The thunder had already been rolling for some time, and lightnings flashed occasionally through the darkness. They rent the clouds, and formed large flaming openings, just as if to afford a glimpse of the other world from this. Large drops of rain, which admonished us to return home, fell pattering upon the leaves of the elms. Deeply affected, I rose, and seized one of Strahl's folded hands, in order to press it to my heart : on letting it go, it sank down, and remained motionless at his side. I became alarmed, felt his forehead, and was terrified on finding it icy cold. In the distress of my heart I fell down before him, embraced his knees, thanked him, called him my friend and father, and conjured him to reply—but in vain ; I could not induce him to utter a sound. An apoplexy had terminated his life ; or rather the Lord, whose name he had uttered with the last tones of his voice, had come to call away his faithful disciple, and conduct him along with him into the kingdom of his joy.

My cries brought to me the old servant man ; who, on learning what had happened, brake out into loud lamentations. He then dried his tears, and said, “ My good master is now where he so long wished to be ; I will not envy him his happiness.” We then carried the corpse of the beloved departed, into the house, and laid it upon the couch, which, when sick, he was wont to use. We closed his eyes, and laid his hands again folded upon his breast. The servant then brought in candles and a Bible. We prayed, each for himself, and read aloud in rotation passages of Scripture upon death, redemption, and immortality. Without, raged the thunder ; and I could not help feeling pleasure, whilst contemplating the tranquil countenance of my deceased friend, that his wish to ascend to heaven in a chariot of flame was fulfilled, and that the earth with its storms lay for ever under his feet.

The next morning, the elders of the church appeared, to whom I related, with deep emotion, how their pastor, after having calmly borne testimony to that which the Lord can effect in the soul, and after calling upon his name, had departed this life. On which, they conferred in my presence respecting the solemnities to be observed at the interment. “ It grieves us,” said they, “ but there will be no one present who can give a funeral address on the occasion. We are surrounded by Catholics ; and if we were to send to a Protestant

clergyman, the nearest is so far from us, that he would not arrive at the proper time."

"Do not trouble yourselves on that account," said I to them. "I know your late pastor's mode of thinking, and am convinced, that if he had made any arrangements respecting his interment, he would positively have forbidden and prohibited any panegyric or funeral sermon. My advice is, that the coffin be carried by you to its resting-place, whilst the bells are tolling; and that, on lowering it into the grave, a hymn be sung by those present. They were satisfied with this arrangement, and left the choice of the hymns and verses to me.

The interment took place on the fifth day. The bells tolled, the elders carried the coffin, the heads of families followed, who were joined by myself and the old servant. The whole congregation had assembled in the church-yard. Anthony, whose betrothed already reposed under the linden-tree, stood beneath the elder, and looked down into the open grave. A hedge sparrow continued to sing without intermission in its branches, and did not let itself be disturbed by the movement of the crowd. The coffin was lowered down, and a verse was sung, which I had selected from one of Paul Gerhard's hymns. At the words,

When I must hence depart,  
Depart not, Lord! from me,—

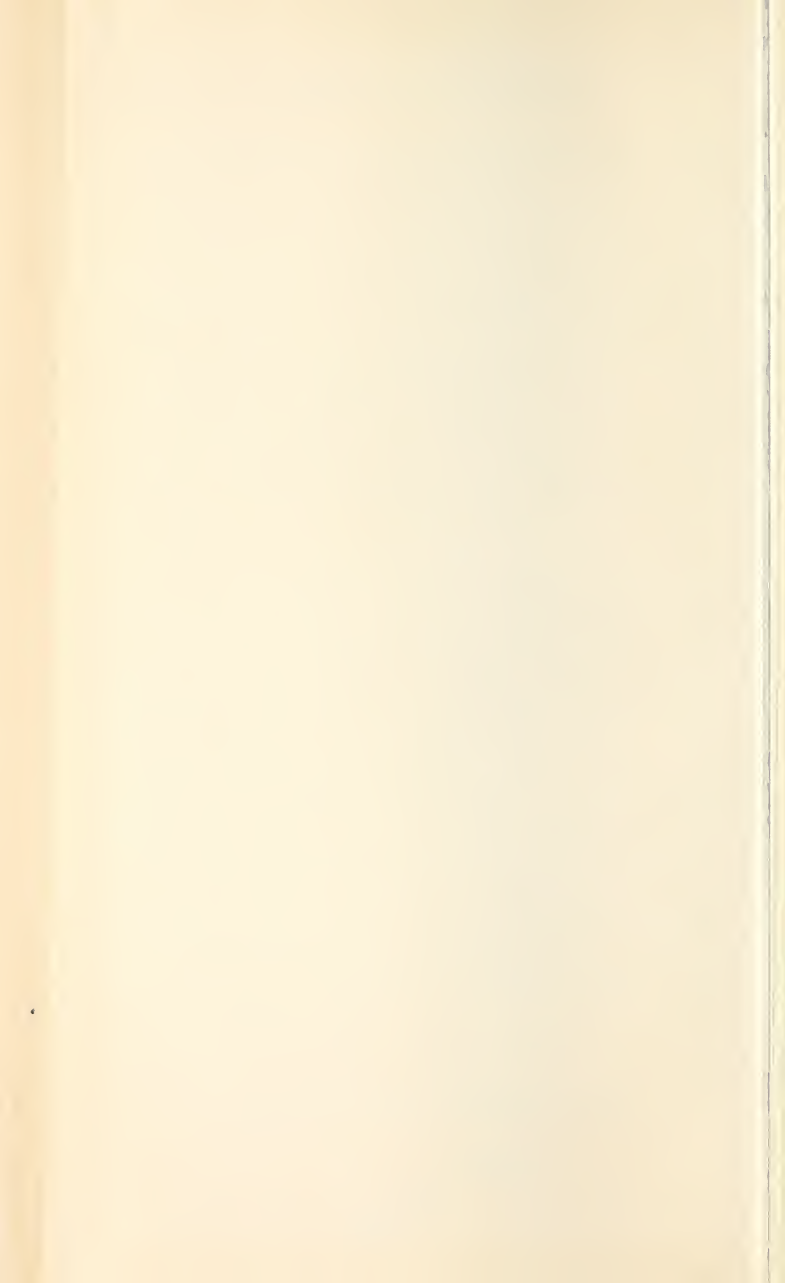
I felt so overpowered by an ardent desire to experience the nearness of the Redeemer, that I sank unconsciously on my knees, and pressed my forehead against the loose earth which was thrown up round the grave. Anthony first, and then all present, followed my example; so that the church-yard was covered with kneeling Christians. During the pauses in the singing, I heard nothing but loud sobbing and weeping. "Beloved friend," thought I, "this is more to your mind than if a brother clergyman had praised you most eloquently!"

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I am just returned from his grave. I have taken leave of it, and have ordered a simple monument to be erected. The recollection of my dear departed friend will ever accompany me. He did not belong to those whom the Christian faith endues with heroic strength in the outward circumstances of life. But his firm resolution to die to the world, in order to live to Christ, and his striving to attain this object with such perseverance, certainly testified of a great and heroic inward courage. This aim, which he has set before me in his ever-memorable parting address, shall also be mine; and may the Lord enable me to press towards it with perseverance!





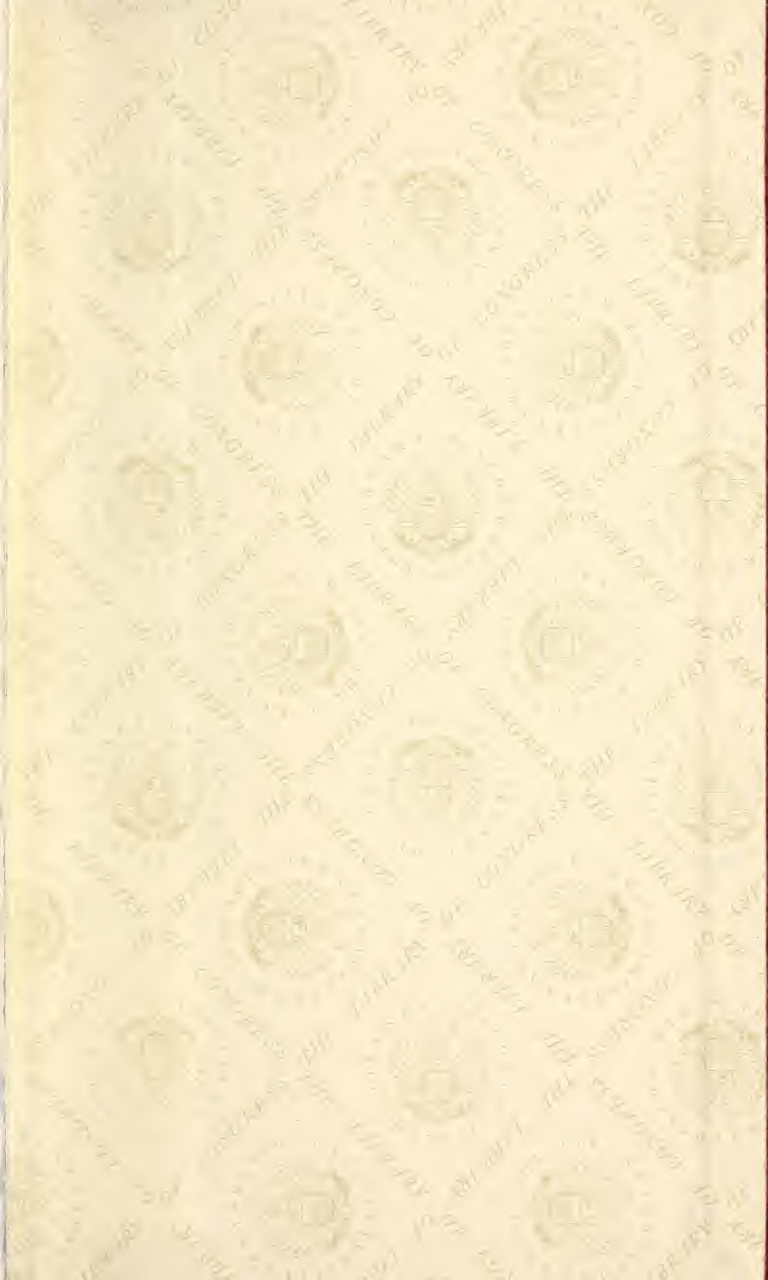




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